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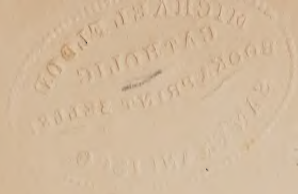
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THE
BEAUTIES OF FAITH;
OR,
POWER OF MARY'S PATRONAGE.
LEAVES FROM
THE "AVE MARIA."

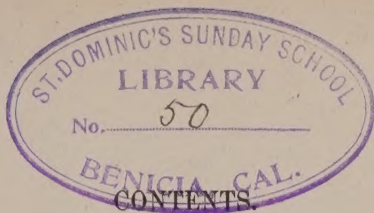
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THE POWER OF THE PATER AND THE AVE MARIA.

BY BISHOP DUPANLOUP.

IN 1836, while connected with the Church of St. Roch, I was for a long time engaged in giving catechetical instruction to the children ; not only the ordinary catechism, but what we called, and what is still called, catechism of perseverance, at which young persons of both sexes attended until their marriage. One day I was called upon to solemnize the marriage of one of these young persons, who was very pious ; she had most assiduously followed our instructions until the hour of this great engagement ; her betrothed was a practical Catholic, so that it was one of those marriages which we can bless with hope and consolation.

Ordinarily an exhortation is given on these occasions ; I said a few words according to the custom, and I still remember that while speaking I had a distraction ; it was caused by a tall man, at least

six feet high, who stood erect while every one else was seated, looking at me with a fixed, intense gaze, and as he was one of the first witnesses at the ceremony, he stood scarcely three steps from me. This proximity, his great height, his original manner, and his fixed look, had, as you may readily understand, attracted my attention, for a moment, and then I cast the impression aside. After the ceremony all retired, and I thought all was finished; far from it. At five o'clock the next morning my bell was rung by the bridegroom, who came in great haste to summon me to a dying man, his uncle, the same tall man who had so singularly distracted me the previous evening. He was quite aged, seventy-four years old; he had taken cold at the wedding ceremony, and the physician declared he could not live. I started immediately, and as we went along the street, I asked, "Was your uncle a good Christian?" "He was a good man, but we fear that he has greatly neglected his religious duties." "Has he any idea of his dangerous condition?" "Yes, he is fully sensible of it." "Does he wish to see me?" "Yes, when we saw that he was struck by death, we asked him if he would not like to see a priest, and he did not refuse. After a moment he said, 'bring me the one I heard yester-

day; he pleased me, and he will arrange my affairs.' ”

The bridegroom also informed me that his uncle had come from the country to attend his wedding, and he was then at a hotel in a cross street. (I have never since passed that hotel without emotion.) We entered, and I was left alone with him. Before me lay this poor old man dying. I approached, and he immediately held out his hand. There was something very frank and noble in his manner. “I am going to die,” he said, “and I wish to do whatever is done at such a time. I am seventy-four years old, and for sixty years I have not been to confession. At fourteen I enlisted; I have been in all the wars of the Revolution and the Empire; I never thought of God during all that time, and I know not why. I now feel that I ought not to leave the world before being reconciled to Him, just as if I had always known Him.” Touched by his frankness and his extraordinarily sincere expression, I replied, “I will aid you to know Him, and God will aid us; such things are easy for those of an upright, candid heart.” But it was not so very easy after all, as you will readily perceive. When, by the assistance of many questions, I had finished his confession for him, “Now,” I said, “I’ll

give you a penance." "What is that? I have not the least idea of it." And in truth he had not the first idea of religion, of the Sacrament of Penance, or of any other Sacrament. . . . A poor dying man, whose hairs were bleached by the snows of almost four-score winters, was passing from earth without having a single idea of Christianity; merely an instinct prompted him to wish for a reconciliation with God before his death.

I explained the meaning of penance, and said: "You suffer very much; offer your suffering to our Blessed Lord, and that will enable me to give you an easy penance; you need only say the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary*." He looked at me for a moment with the most intent and piercing gaze, for although so exhausted by age and sickness, he had a most extraordinary energy in his eye, and then said, "*Our Father, Hail Mary!* What do they mean? I have never heard anything about them." Yes, this was the state which the poor miserable man had reached; seventy-four years old, and he had forgotten even the prayers that infants in their mother's arms lisp in childish accents. Religion was utterly obliterated from this soul! There remained nothing! nothing! I cast a look towards Heaven, and I felt that a miracle was needed to

bring back the past, or to enlighten his darkened soul.

“You ought to know,” I said, “that those prayers are the most beautiful in religion. I will assist you; I will say them myself; you will say them afterwards with me, and then we will find all you have lost.”

Kneeling down by his bedside, and holding his hand in both of mine, I commenced. He let me say the two or three first invocations of the *Our Father*, but when I said *forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us*, he suddenly pressed my hand, and as one arousing from a long sleep, he exclaimed, “Oh! I remember that. Yes! I think when I was a little boy my mother taught me something like that. Will you please commence it again?” I re-commenced, and then, instantaneously, from the depths of his soul, across his darkened mind, and from far away in his early childhood—across seventy-four years—across all those wars and all those battle-fields which had passed over his life, and effaced from his soul all ideas of religion, came back to this old soldier the remembrance of his mother, and the prayers she had taught him when he was a little boy, and he commenced unaided to recall the words. One by one

I saw them leave his soul, as if they had all been engulfed, and were now rising to the surface. At each sentence he interrupted himself: "Oh!" he exclaimed, "I remember—*Our Father who art in Heaven*—yes, indeed, that is it—*hallowed be thy name*—that is it again!—I remember it all now!—*thy kingdom come*. Yes, yes, I remember I used to say all that—Oh! isn't that prayer beautiful!" And when he came to the words *forgive us our trespasses*, "Ah!" he cried, "above all the rest, I remember that—those are the words that brought all the rest back to me; my mother used to make me say that whenever I did anything wrong." And in this manner he finished the "Our Father," then he asked to say it with me, and seemed never weary in repeating it over and over.

"But," he exclaimed, "is there not another? Oh! yes, now I remember my mother said there was a Blessed Virgin—stop—I must find that prayer also! But it won't come back. Say it to me so I can remember all about it." And when I repeated the first words, he interrupted me with a joyful cry, "Oh! yes, that is it! *Hail Mary!*" And then, without waiting for me to take the lead, he continued, "*full of grace, the Lord is with thee,*" and all the words seemed to flow miraculously from

his soul, and with tears flowing down his cheeks, he repeated, "*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us poor sinners, now and at the hour of our death.*"

Behold in this old man the power of the prayers which a pious mother had taught him in his childhood! Precious germs deposited in his soul, and a long time buried there—but thank God—*they were there*—and at the supreme moment, under a favorable ray of Divine grace, they burst forth to support him in his last hours, and to open for him the gates of a happy eternity! He never wearied in saying them, but continued constantly repeating them.

Finally, seeing that he was fatigued, I left him, promising to return as soon as he had taken some repose. And I did return very soon, for I was most anxious to give him Holy Communion. He received the viaticum with the most lively faith; all had been revealed with those two prayers. I had nothing more to teach him.

THE PRISONER OF WAR.

A LEGEND BY L. D'APPILY.

CHAPTER I.—GOD WILLS IT.

It was the heroic age of christianity ; the spirit of God had made the nations of western Europe His chosen people. In the heart of these nations, still young and full of vitality, the noble fire of heroism was kindled, and faith, covering the earth with miracles, had changed the savage hardihood of barbarians into that admirable christian valor which is the ornament of modern history.

Europe was agitated to its very foundations. St. Bernard was summoning the brave, for a second time, to the Crusade. His eloquence renewed, so it is said, the prodigy which accompanied the first preaching of the Gospel ; Belgians, Germans, natives of Provence and of Normandy, inhabiting, as they did, different lands, and speaking different dialects, each one of his auditors understood clearly the language of the holy abbot. From the banks

of the Danube to the foot of the Pyrenees, but one sole cry was to be heard—a cry flying from mouth to mouth, and repeated by the answering echoes : “God wills it.”

Yes, God willed it, for Asia and Africa were groaning under the yoke of the koran, and the foul creed of Mahomet menaced the empire of Christ on the south, on the east and on the west ; for the christians were exhausting their own strength in fratricidal war ; for the nobility, who were the only land owners, were crushing their vassals, and thereby ultimately impoverishing themselves. Communities must be multiplied to purchase back with money their own rights and liberties. The serf must be made the companion in arms and the friend of his lord ; he must lie beneath the same tent, and drink the water of the same torrent from the same cup. The crusader must bring back from beyond the sea that taste for the arts and for poetry which the west, since the dissolution of the Roman Empire, had lost. Chivalry, in fine, must establish a new right, more powerful than the blind right of arms and of brute force, that weakness and infancy may have their champions and protectors.

The spirit of adventure boiled in the blood of Europeans. The warriors who fought and bled

with Godfrey de Bouillon, and founded the kingdom of Jerusalem, had, on their return, vaunted the marvels of oriental cities, and the charms of the delightful climes they had visited.

Their tales, embellished by the poetry of romance, had inflamed the fancy of all; besides, a religious motive prompted every baron to take the cross. Was there one who, looking sincerely into his conscience, found there no crimes to be expiated? Multitudes, therefore, armed themselves for these warlike pilgrimages. The Emperor of Germany led the van; the King of France wore the cross as his proudest insignia. Dukes, earls and barons published the Crusade through their territories. The peasants rallied round their feudal lords, and the towns-people contributed their money towards the expenses of the holy expedition.

Berenger de Montier could not stay shut up in the gloomy walls of his ancestral castle, whilst his neighbors were flocking to Palestine to earn glory, indulgences, and perhaps kingdoms. But spurred, as he was, to emulation by the glorious examples around, his heart could scarce consent to part from his beloved wife, Etienne. He could not bring himself to mention the subject to her, but the courageous lady herself took the initiative. She had

early suspected the design of her husband ; he was constrained and embarrassed in her presence. She saw him make, in secret, preparations for war, buying horses, accumulating resources, and she would not stop the warrior by her unworthy tears, but summoning all her courage, she addressed him thus :

“ My lord, I know that you have formed the design of going to fight the infidels. Although to part with you will grieve my inmost heart, it would be a sin for me to be an obstacle in your way. Depart then. If your absence exposes me to danger, I will look to the Church for refuge and aid. I am too weak to follow you ; but whilst you serve God by your valor, I shall pray St. Hubert and the Blessed Virgin to guard you from wounds and captivity ; and when you return, covered with glory, the Baroness of Montier will be proud to call you husband !”

She embroidered with her own hands the silken cross upon her husband's shoulder, and when the day of departure arrived, after having received with firmness his last farewell kisses at the castle gate, she ascended a turret to watch him gallop over the plain at the head of his esquires and men-at-arms, until he was completely out of sight.

Berenger was one of the hardest warriors of his time. He was tall in stature, and possessed of prodigious bodily strength. His coat of steel-ringed mail was no weight upon his robust frame. His mighty arm was equally skillful in the use of the battle-axe, the sword and the lance. Among all the most redoubtable heroes of Provence, there were very few that would dare to enter the lists against him, for he had never been overcome.

He had raised his vizor, and the sun shone full upon his noble countenance, embrowned by the toils of war. His forehead and his raven locks were hidden by his helmet, but the lightnings flashed from his black and sparkling eyes. A rough beard covered the lower part of his face, but did not conceal his firm-set mouth; and such was the martial appearance of his whole figure, that the most phlegmatic could not contemplate it without admiration, and his very look was sufficient to inspire terror.

His was a fierce and still half savage nature. The energetic passions of his barbaric ancestors were not entirely stifled within his breast. The politeness of a count had not enervated his character. The science of arms had been the sole study of his life, and constant practice had continually increased his natural courage.

But nevertheless, among these savage instincts his heart was truly noble; hatred and resentment found no place in his bosom. Terrible and implacable during the strife, when he had overcome he raised his fallen foe, and forgot his anger. Danger had an irresistible attraction for him, and he felt continually impelled, by an interior force, to attempt the impossible; he disdained an easy triumph, and the weak had nothing to fear from him. He loved to wander, as a knight-errant, in search of adventures, to avenge the oppressed, to humble tyrants, and to sustain his honor against all who presumed to defy him. Obstinate and intrepid, when he had resolved upon any enterprise nothing could turn him aside from it. He despised all fraud or stratagem, and met every obstacle face to face, preferring to die rather than to surrender.

There was but one person in the world capable of ruling this indomitable spirit; it was the Lady Etienneette; she was fragile and delicate, but she could make this giant tremble. Docile to her as a slave, he bowed to her will in every event. He read his duty in the eyes of his wife, ashamed when she found anything to blame, proud and happy where she thought fit to praise. During the winter festivities, when the Lady Etienneette appeared in the

banqueting hall, drunkenness itself became mute ; she raised her finger to command, and the most insolent dare not disobey. The devotion of the soldiers to her bordered on fanaticism ; there was not one of her husband's vassals but would have leaped from the topmost tower upon upturned pikes at the slightest nod of her head.

It was to her weakness that the Baroness owed her power. Still young, lovely and graceful, she was all the world in the eyes of her husband. He set but a low value on the strength and manly virtues with which he was himself so largely endowed, but he carried to idolatry his worship of modesty and grace.

The same sentiments ruled his faith. He adored God because he believed him more powerful than himself, and he feared Him, although he could not understand how He could have permitted His only Son to have been murdered by despicable Jews. He laughed at hell and the devils, but the image of our Blessed Lady was to him the symbol of all his faith. He desired Heaven because it was blessed with her sweet presence. He cared not for the society of angels, whose incorporeal shapes were beyond his comprehension. Paradise was to him the vision and the presence of the Holy Virgin. He

loved to recommend himself to her ; God appeared so much above him, and he had but slender confidence in the celestial credit of the saints. It is true that Mary had never been deaf to his prayers. When any one mentioned her name, his usual sternness gave way to a more tender air. He would have joyfully shed every drop of his blood for her, and perhaps it was because he recognized her form under that of Etienne, that he submitted so completely to the dominion of his wife.

These two affections, the only ones rooted in his heart since the death of his mother, had taken entire possession of the bosom of Berenger ; no other creature had discovered the way to inspire him with attachment. He did not love his esquire Rayboul, in spite of many services received from him. Rayboul was brave, but cunning and sly, and the blackest treachery would have cost him but little remorse if he could gain anything by it. Berenger had frequently owed both his success and his safety to the stratagems of his esquire, but he despised him even for the very craft that contrived them.

He had more regard for the noble courser upon which he rode. This fiery animal, the companion of all his labors, coated with mail like his master, but galloping as if untrammelled, inhaling the free

air with dilated nostril, and curvetting nobly, dashed on in advance of the other horses, which he took pride in keeping in his rear.

CHAPTER II.—THE SURPRISE.

CONRAD, Emperor of Germany, would not wait for the French Crusaders, but had arrived in Asia before them. Betrayed, however, by the perfidious and designing policy of the Greeks, he had beheld his army scattered to the winds, and had only reached Jerusalem with the greatest difficulty. Louis, King of France, surnamed "*Le Jeune*," or, "The Young," collected the remnant of his troops, and advanced by another road towards the Holy City.

The Moslems were entrenched upon the steep banks of the Meander, and in their defence of this pass there was much bloodshed. On arriving within view of them, a Provençal knight spurred his foaming steed into the river. The enemy assailed him with masses of rock, arrows and javelins; he mocked their fury, while his horse, swimming with an effort, brought him safely at last to the bank.

The infidels rushed upon him, and opposed a bay-

rier of closely-serried pikes to his further progress. The Crusader, invulnerable in his armor, flourished his heavy sword, cut down all that opposed him, and made a bloody road for his war-horse, which bounded on ferociously, crushing the dying and wounded under his hoofs. The Saracens would not flee; in vain the Provençal rang upon their ear; they had not yet learned to know the Baron de Montier, and they allowed themselves to be massacred with intrepidity.

Following in the steps of Berenger, the whole Christian army advanced. It was not a battle—it was a frightful carnage, which raged with increasing fury till it covered all the plain. The Europeans penetrated to the centre of their foes, and the field was covered with the slain. Routed and dispersed, the Saracens rallied at the voice of their chiefs, and arranged themselves again in line of battle, until the lances and battle-axes of the Western warriors put them to flight anew.

The Crusaders lost but a small number of soldiers, who were either slaughtered from ambush, or lost in the fray. But the Moslem force was annihilated, and a century would not suffice the burning wind of the South to decompose the multitude of bones.

Still, Islamism repaired its losses. Profiting by the confidence with which this victory had inspired the Franks, the Saracens surprised their rear guard and massacred them. The Christian columns who marched in front turned back, avenged the death of their comrades, and changed into defeat this ephemeral triumph of the infidels; but when the night came, and the Crusaders, scattered over the country in pursuit of the vanquished, re-assembled in their camp, they perceived, to their utter confusion, that the king was no longer amongst them.

Louis had, in fact, allowed himself to be carried away by the impetuosity of his horse; when the infidels perceived him separated from his own troops, they turned upon him, and at once assailed him on every side; the prince returned their blows, without losing courage for a moment, and was even confident of victory, until, while he was spreading death around him, a Saracen slipped under his horse, and plunged his poignard into the animal's entrails.

Louis disengaged himself from the dying body of his noble charger, seized his sword, and prepared to defend himself to the last. A circle of iron surrounded him, but he broke through it, and took refuge beneath a palm tree. Placing his back against the trunk of the tree, so that he need not fear an

attack from behind, he fought manfully against the troop of Saracens, who were dazzled by his golden accoutrements, and who exhausted themselves in the furious assault, without being able either to wound or to subdue him.

These titanic combats of a single man against entire armies, would deserve to be ranked among the fairy tales which are at once the delight and the terror of children, were it not that history, more marvellous in this case than fable, attests their indubitable truth; however, these prodigious feats will not astonish any one who has measured and weighed the coats of mail to be found in our museums of arms; the massive cuirasses and the swords of that age. These colossal panoplies, which would weigh down our feebleness to the earth, must have been the armor of giants. Covered from head to foot with plates or rings of iron, which broke in pieces the fine points of Moslem sabres, the vigor of their arms, and the effect of their blows must have been redoubled by the consciousness that they were almost invulnerable.

The king bravely held his ground. On a sudden there appeared in the distance a knight who, like himself, had lost his way; he stopped, and gazed around him on the plain, when he perceived Louis

defending himself against the party of infidels; he turned his horse's head towards the fray, and flourishing his sword, precipitated himself upon the assailants, shouting :

“A Montier to the rescue! Slay! slay! the miscreants!”

The Moslems, taken by surprise by his sudden arrival, hesitated, and made a movement to flee. Louis profited by their confusion, jumped upon a horse, made good his retreat, and regained the camp, where Berenger rejoined him on the morrow.

These two victories opened to the Crusaders the way to Jerusalem. Berenger prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, and in the church of the Holy Sepulchre; performed, barefoot, with a rope about his neck, all the stations of the “*Via Dolorosa*,” and swore, as he rose from his knees, to kill as many Saracens as our Blessed Redeemer took steps in going from the pretorium to Calvary.

Louis of Franco found Conrad at Jerusalem. They resolved to besiege Damascus, which was the most powerful city of the Moslems. The entrenchments were made without difficulty. The Caliph had assembled the flower of his army within the walls, but still he could not contemplate the future

without anxiety. The besieging force in a short time had prepared their engines of war ; they made, almost daily, terrible assaults upon the city, and appeared several times on the very point of entering.

While the Christian camp was plunged in sleep one night, after a laborious day's strife, the Saracens made a quiet descent upon them. A profound midnight darkness veiled their approach. They surprised the sentinels, and cut their throats, and penetrated to the very tents of the soldiers. It was the side upon which the Provençaux were encamped. Berenger, exhausted by the fatigues of the previous day, was sleeping heavily ; but one of his soldiers, who had been wounded in the side, was lying awake in his bed, a prey to fever—he heard the infidels, and gave the alarm.

Montier sprang from his couch, seized his armor, put it on in haste, and rushed from his tent. Already a party of Crusaders, panic-stricken, are flying in disorder ; already the infidels begin to ply their incendiary torches. The cries of the wounded and dying increase the horrors of the panic.

After having listened an instant to this tumult, Berenger comprehended the danger, and rushed to stop the way of the Saracen host, crying, in his re-

sounding tones, "Provence to arms! The enemy is upon us!"

His well-known voice arrested the fugitives. The Crusaders regained courage, and, facing the enemy, followed their indomitable leader. And then followed a terrible conflict in the dark; a more handful of crusaders trying to repel that vast invading force, already flushed with their early success.

There is always a tragic harmony in the mortal shock of arms. When the sun shines upon a battle-field, and his beams are reflected from the flashing rapiers, and burnished shields; when the soldier can behold his enemy face to face, and follow with his eyes the murderous movements of his arm; when brothers fall before the face of brothers who are unable to defend them—then the scene is terrible, and neither the excitement of the strife nor the ardor of victory can diminish its horror. But how much more frightful is war when carried on in the darkness of night—when the combatants strike at hazard, and know not where their blows may fall.

The Provençaux, surrounded by Saracens, resisted the aggressors with heroic intrepidity. Rallying around the Baron de Montier, they made an onslaught which their assailants could not withstand. The infidels recoiled from the shock like some

vast projectile hurled from a catapult with irresistible violence, leaving the ground strewn with corpses as they fled. But receiving a continual increase of numbers from without, they returned repeatedly to the strife.

From time to time an arrow or the point of a lance, thrown at hazard, would find some weak spot in the Christian armor, and pierce the flesh of a warrior. Some of the crusaders tottered and fell to the earth, when the infidels would butcher them without mercy. The Christians were now becoming weary, and the wounds they inflicted less deep. They suffered an exhausting perspiration, while a burning thirst consumed their bowels. The Saracens, on the contrary, appeared to gain vigor, as they saw the strength of their opponents diminish. Their number had now increased so much, that it seemed as though their whole army had united to overwhelm the Provençaux, and to subdue them by fatigue.

Berenger had expected that the Franks, after having freed their own camp from the enemy, would come to the assistance of the Provençaux. He now began to hear loud acclamations from behind. He stopped, and, covering himself with his shield, took breath, and rested for a moment.

Just then the noise becoming greater, and the party from behind coming up nearer, he could distinguish the voices of christians shouting :

“ On ! on ! Drive them out ! The battle is won ! ”

Montier could not contain himself any longer. He lifted his mace, and struck right and left, without knowing whether his companions were following or not ; he strode forward into the midst of the flying horde of Saracens, which was pouring down the way. The sun had not yet risen ; he knew not where he was going ; he rushed on, and entered the gates of the city with the fugitives.

He discovered at last where he was, by the lights in the windows, and he ran through the streets, exclaiming :

“ The city is ours ! pillage—slay ! no mercy ! ”

The Saracens, terror-stricken, precipitately closed the gates, leaving outside half of their comrades, whom the christians massacred, without their friends daring to save them by letting them in.

But Berenger was accompanied by only three esquires. When the Saracens, recovering from their fright, perceived that they were the only enemies they had to fight, they took courage and attacked them with fury.

The christians set their backs against the walls

of a palace, and, immovable, put their assailants at defiance. Already the heap of slain formed a bleeding rampart around them. It is not possible to say what might have been the issue of this desperate struggle. But the occupants of the palace cast stones and heavy pieces of furniture from above upon their heads. Two of Montier's companions fell in their turn upon the heap of corpses that they had made, and finally the hero himself began to totter, and at last fell to the ground, stunned, and vomiting gore.

CHAPTER III.—THE TEMPTATION.

THE Saracens did not know their prisoners' names, but on account of the bravery they had seen them display, they took them to be persons of high rank. Some inconsiderate words that Rayboul let fall made them even think they had taken captive the King of France. The rumor was repeated throughout the whole city, and made amends for the check which the late attempt on the christian camp had met.

The christians were stripped and bound. They

were carried in triumph upon hurdles through the principal streets. Their arms, arranged as a trophy, were borne before them. The infidels danced around their captives with a wild mirth, and insulted them by songs of defiance and derision.

Aroused from his agony by the noise of their shouts, Berenger raised his bleeding head. His eyes still retained so terrible an expression that the startled mob fell back, unable to sustain that unearthly fire.

Having been made aware of his mighty deeds, and struck with admiration for his valor, the Caliph received the Baron into his own palace, and sent surgeons to attend to his wounds. Thanks to their skill and to the beverages they gave him, the lord of Montier was, at the end of a few days, out of danger.

The Moslem prince was too anxious to make the acquaintance of his captive to allow him to rest long. As soon as Berenger was able to speak, an imaum, one of the Caliph's favorites, was sent to him with an interpreter to question him.

"Allah is God," said he, "and Mahomet is His true prophet; may he obtain for me the grace of salvation! Who art thou?"

"Berenger, Baron of Montier."

"May Allah renew the blossoms of thy youth. What rank didst thou hold in the armies of France?"

"The one nearest to the enemy."

"After piety, courage is the first virtue of a warrior. How many soldiers didst thou command?"

"I had no command; I led the way and the most valiant followed me."

"Deceit is fruitless as dew upon the desert. Do not attempt to conceal thy rank; we shall not offer thee to be ransomed."

"Miscreant! am I a knave, that I should lie?"

"O ho! for a private soldier, methinks thou art haughty; hunger subdues the panther. Captivity will bring down thy pride. At least thou wert spoken of as a warrior of renown."

"I do not pretend to be more valiant than the noble Franks, my companions; I flatter myself, however, that I have earned a little glory."

"Modesty is a gracious and beautiful veil that enhances the splendor of great deeds. We have seen thee accomplish actions of marvellous heroism."

"Your soldiers know only how to use their heels. Among the Franks, who know how to use their arms, there is nothing extraordinary in what I have done."

“Let truth ever bloom upon thy lips. What is the number of the Crusaders?”

“If you count by the men, there are fifty thousand; if you compare them with the infidels they fight, there are two hundred thousand.”

“The edge of our scimetars is sharp; they have pierced the hearts of many Franks.”

“If your pestilences and the heat of your sun had not been more murderous than your arms, we should have overwhelmed you.”

“The world is wide and Allah is powerful; your country is now deserted. If the Saracens of Africa were to invade it, who would defend it in your absence?”

“Who would defend it? Our wives and our children would drive them back. But our country is not quite deserted yet. When the king publishes another call to arms in his provinces, you will behold rushing upon you another army more numerous than the first.”

“Avarice opens a yawning gulf in the heart of man! What do you come to seek in this burning land that is so fatal to you? Are your own domains barren? Is it hunger that thus exiles you, and makes you insensible to mortal danger?”

“Our valleys are fertile, and yield a hundred-

fold ; our fields support ten times as many inhabitants. We came here to avenge the crimes which infidels have committed against our brothers, the pilgrims ; we come to punish them for having polluted those places which were hallowed by the footsteps of Jesus Christ."

"May Mahomet enlighten your eyes with the splendor of his divine religion ! Do all the crusaders obey the same chief?"

"In the camp they do. But in our own dominions dukes, margraves, earls and barons, we acknowledge no master but God—no right but our sword."

"The law of the prophet is terrible. Knowest thou the fate that the koran assigns to a vanquished foe?"

"No ; but I know that the christians besiege your walls, and that the moon will not fill her horns before they will call you to account here for our lives. I know that then thou wilt beseech me in my turn to save thy head from the extermination and the carnage."

The haughty mien of the prisoner astonished the imaum, and inspired him with involuntary respect. He dared not insult his misfortune, and he was tak-

ing his departure to report this interview to the Caliph, when Berenger asked of him :

“Where are my esquires?”

“The shadow of Allah has encompassed them, and they have not perished.”

“Remember that they are my soldiers, and that their lives are as precious to me as my own.”

“These words, being carried to the Caliph, increased more than ever the desire he entertained of attaching the christian knight to himself.

“Would it not be a work agreeable to Allah to convert to Islam so haughty a soldier?”

“He who has brought an accursed infidel to the true faith,” replied the imaum, “shall be placed, after death, in the third heaven. But pride has darkened his understanding, and covered his eyes with a leaden veil.”

“But is not the undertaking at least worth a trial?”

“Allah is God. The word of the prophet has shone throughout the world with more brightness than the sun. Woe to those who do not receive it.”

“The enemy is at our gates, resolute, numerous, bloodthirsty. Death is in their lances and slaughter in their hearts. If the bravest of the Franks

were to fight in our ranks against his own countrymen, their fury would seem to me less to be dreaded."

"The cause of the believers is sacred. Allah will dash his hand in the mouths of the impious, and break their teeth."

"Return to the captive; explain to him the koran with its most seductive passages; dazzle his fancy with offers and promises. Tell him that he will become the champion of the prophet and the mainstay of my power."

The exhortation of the moslem made but a weak impression on the bold and hardy spirit of Berenger. Perhaps in translating them, the interpreters spoiled the effect of his eloquence. They left the Baron stern and frigid. He scarcely listened to them.

"I wish I had my chaplain here," he said. "He would confute your arguments, and in a few words completely silence you."

The soldier was but poorly instructed in the dogmas of christianity, but the faith instilled into him from infancy had become incorporated with his existence. It coursed with his blood through his veins, and was united to him by ties so powerful that death itself would not sever them.

“Thy religion,” pursued the Saracen, “imposes painful mortifications—sacrifices that it is almost impossible to accomplish. What does it promise in return for so many sufferings and privations? A dry and barren happiness which it is impossible to fancy. The prophet promises to believers more substantial pleasures. When we have passed the bridge of souls, the angel leads us by roads covered with silken carpets, into the hall of eternal festivities. There, all the senses at once are inundated with the plenitude of happiness. Rivulets of perfumes, flowing melodiously through amber channels, fill the air with a balmy freshness. A light, pure and soft, like that of the moon, rejoices the eyes without dazzling them. Divine voices, mingled with the sounds of the most agreeable instruments, make sweet, enchanting harmony. Houris, with bewitching smiles, join the charms of the dance to those of music, or place the most delicious viands upon tables of agate, and fill brimming goblets with the nectar of pleasure.”

“But,” asked Berenger, “is there any chaste and prudent lady presiding at these festivities to maintain order and decency? Otherwise, your repasts would be drunken orgies. In my castle, I must have my baroness, Etiennette, and in heaven Our

Blessed Lady must occupy the throne of grace and beauty."

"Listen now to the torments reserved for those who do not believe. At the gate of paradise the angel of Azrael stops them; he seizes them and casts them bodily into——"

"If he is the conqueror!" interrupted the warrior. "As for me, if I can have my spear, I will attack him boldly, and perhaps I shall succeed in making him feel the force of my arm."

"Canst thou hope to strive against an angel whose loins are girded with the breath of Allah?"

"The patriarch Jacob did, and gained the advantage——"

"He will seize thee by the hair, and lift thee as easily from the earth as thou canst lift pigeons' feathers. He will cast thee into the well of darkness, which is so deep that the fall lasts a hundred years. At the bottom of this——"

"And," again asked Berenger, "are all christians cast into this well?"

"Unless they are converted to mahometanism, for it is written in the first chapter of the koran——"

"Very well," continued the crusader, "I do not wish to go anywhere else. I am very sure that Our Lady, the Mother of God, was never a Saracen,

and I do not want to be separated from her for all eternity."

CHAPTER IV.—THE ASSAULT.

THE Caliph hoped that time would weaken the attachment of the crusader to the religion of his fathers. He flattered himself that he could seduce him from his loyalty by caresses and favors, and bring him, through gratitude, to that apostacy whose sophisms he so steadily refused.

Berenger was therefore treated with great regard and attention. His wounds were healed in a short time by the care of physicians, and still more effectually by the vigor of his constitution; and if it were not that his scars made his countenance even more stern and terrible than before, he arose from his bed very soon completely cured.

They did not put him in irons. They made him swear upon the Gospel not to escape; and upon this promise he had no prison but his own good faith, and was at liberty to walk through the city wherever he pleased.

The Caliph assigned him a palace for his dwell-

ing, and slaves to wait upon him. Often invited to the table of the prince, loaded with distinctions and honors, the prisoner began to excite the jealousy of the moslem officers.

In the feasts that were given him daily, nothing was forgotten that could inflame the sensual appetites. They studied to excite his passions, that they might lead him, by means of licentiousness, to a religion whose pliable and corrupted morality legitimizes and fosters the base instincts which disturb the darkest recesses of the human heart.

Temperance did not always hold control in the soul of the crusader. Idleness and the want of excitement laid him open to the suggestions of vice and the snares of the moslems. The nights were too short for his long banquets. The wine of Asia is perfumed, and in its rosy drops dance sylphs, and peris, and dreams of gold. Berenger indulged in it without stint. His moslem friends, forgetting the injunctions of the koran, incited and provoked him to drink deeply.

And all the solicitations of vice were mingled with the praises of Islam and the derision of the Gospel. Berenger did not answer; but he sometimes reflected that the Cross adorned his shoulder. Blushes of shame would cover his face in the midst

of the festivities. He would arise from the table with trembling steps, and motioning off his attendants, and the companions of the feasts, he would hide himself in his private apartments.

When these means, therefore, had failed, they had recourse to magic. They mixed philters and drugs with his drink, that plunged him into delicious lethargies, full of ecstasies and the wild visions of opium and hemp-seed. While he was sleeping in his chamber, transported during his slumbers by mysterious phantoms, he would awaken in enchanted gardens, where he was afforded a foretaste of the delights of the mahometan paradise.

They raised before him the vision of Etiennette. She pressed him to embrace the religion of the Prophet, which she said she had already made her own. Then he was carried back again to his bed, and the remembrance of these hallucinations worked upon his spirit in solitude, and bewildered him.

When they thought they had shaken his faith, the Caliph sent for him, and making him sit on his right, upon a rich divan, he spoke to him, by an interpreter, as follows :

“May Allah crown thy brows with glory and prosperity! Does not inaction lie heavy on thy

heart, and art thou not impatient to use the lance again?"

Berenger sighed, and answered :

"Alas! tell what are my brethren, the crusaders, doing all this time? Are their engines of war still far from the ramparts? Why do they not begin the assault?"

"Deceive thyself no longer with that vain hope. Discord prevails in their camp; they will never enter Damascus. Separate thyself from them entirely; receive from my hands a well-tempered scimitar, and fight on my side."

"I have made a vow to wage war until death against the Saracens."

"I will heap honors and dignities upon thee. My favor will elevate thee above all my ministers in time of peace, and above all my captains in war. My treasures shall be thine. Thou hast only to choose the most sumptuous of my palaces, and my eldest daughter shall be thy bride."

"I am a christian."

"Can the Cross outweigh advantages like these? Even when you return to the land of France, what will you find there? A miserable barony, exhausted of men and resources; a castle ready to fall into ruins; a wife grown old, and perhaps faithless.

But do not hope ever to leave here. Before four days have passed, the right hand of Allah shall be laid upon the enemies of his law, and the exterminating angel shall disperse their cohorts."

"Thy soldiers will quail before the glance of the crusaders."

"I have a defence more powerful than the maces of the Franks. It will break the iron of their cuirasses and halberds, and overthrow their towers and ballistas. This defence, this auxiliary—is gold. The soldiers of Christ have stretched forth their hands and their helmets to me to obtain it. I have scattered it abroad, but I have not succeeded in satiating them yet. They have sold me their friends and their brethren; they would have sold themselves if I had been rich enough to buy them."

"If such is the case, shame upon them! I will not imitate their disloyalty. I will remain faithful to my oath! But you wish to try me; what you say is impossible. Christians do not sell their brethren."

Just at that moment a deformed and hideous dwarf approached, and spoke to the Caliph in Arabic. The Saracen immediately took Berenger by the hand, and said to him:

"To-morrow, at daybreak, I will show thee that

I am not idly boasting of things that I cannot do ; thou mayest judge afterwards if the crusaders merit so devoted an attachment as thine."

On the morrow the Caliph conveyed his prisoner to the top of the highest tower. Thence the view extended over the entire city and the neighboring country. Berenger did not turn to admire the splendid terraces, nor the verdant gardens adorned with kiosks brilliant'y painted and gilt, nor the many-balconied minarets. His eye sought eagerly the camp of the Crusaders on the extended plain.

He beheld the tents arranged in rows, symmetrical, like a city with its streets and squares. The different nations were in separate divisions, distinguished by their banners. The Franks were in the centre, around the tent of the king, whose flag was waving in the breeze. The Flemish, proud of the exploits of Godfrey de Bouillon, occupied the right ; and the Gascons, vassals of Queen Eleanor, were ranged upon the left. He recognized, also, the pavilion of the Plantagenets, and the Greek cross of the Emperor of Constantinople. The Provençal knights were still in the place that Berenger had defended for them, in front of the principal gate of Damascus, but the banner embroidered by the lady of Montier shone no longer in the sun.

In front of the camp were ranged, under a strong defence, the formidable engines that constituted the artillery of those days. He counted five moving towers of wood, with draw-bridges on the top, flanked with ballistas of every shape, mangonels, gigantic slings, pulleys, levers and catapults—engines that would rain a shower of stones from their immense beams. Here and there, at regular intervals, was a line of brazen-headed battering-rams, which would shake the buttresses of the ramparts to their very foundation. Everywhere around was observable that agitation which precedes the approach of deadly strife.

The besieged did not remain imprudently idle. The walls were alive with soldiers, preparing for an energetic defence. Some were arranging engines to oppose those of the Crusaders; others were collecting projectiles, boiling oil and pitch, attaching torches to arrows to fire their enemies' camp; others, in fine, were making a store of linen and healing drops, for the cure of wounds.

Suddenly, at a signal given by striking a shield with the point of a pike, the warriors issued in arms from their tents; they directed their steps towards an altar, erected on the previous night, and arranged themselves around it. A bishop ascended

the steps, and prayed God to infuse strength and victory into the sinews of the champions who were about to offer their blood for Him.

He blessed the engines of war, and exorcised them, that magic and the artifice of demons might have no influence over them. Then he turned towards his warlike auditory, and sent them forth to fight, repeating with enthusiasm :

“God wills it!—God wills it!”

The army marched forth with ardor. The monks—for there were some who had hidden their frock under a coat of mail, and exchanged their pilgrim’s staff for a pike—entoned with sonorous voices the hymn which begins :

“*Vexilla regis prodeunt,
Fulget crucis mysterium.*”

This chant, which fifty thousand lips repeated, resounded with terrific harmony through the city; it was borne upon the wind to the ears of the prisoner, who trembled with joy.

The destructive engines, worked by myriads of hands, commenced to roll forward. The archers and slingers in ambush at the foot of the walls let fly their missiles. The shower of darts darkened the air. The Saracens dared not show themselves upon the walls or at the loop-holes. The ballistas

and mangonels hurled clouds of bullets and stones ; the battering-rams struck the outworks with a threatening noise, and the towers, full of armed men, almost touched the parapets of the walls.

The moslems opposed engines to engines, and death to death. Burning arrows, torches of burning hemp, vessels of lighted pitch, passing above the heads of the besieged, sought the engines of the christians, and inflicted fiery wounds. The crusaders seized them, and sent them back whence they came.

The knights were a little in the rear, waiting for a breach to be made for them to enter. The Queen of France was present at this battle, at some distance, resting upon a *dais* of purple silk, and animating, by her gestures, the courage of her warriors.

The Franks, surrounding the royal banner, had so formidable an air that Berenger, glowing with pride, had no doubt of the fall of the city. The Caliph presented a calm and indifferent aspect, and the smile of confidence never quitted his lips.

“Do not be apprehensive, prince,” said the prisoner to him ; “since thou hast spared my life, I will protect thine till the end of the massacre. Then we shall be quits.”

"Thou art now to behold," answered the Caliph, "the most shameful defeat that thine army has ever sustained."

The rams were too slow in their work of destruction. The crusaders were impatient. They approached the walls, shouted their names, and defied the bravest of the Saracens. They received no answers but insults, and asking for scaling-ladders, they set them up against the walls, in the midst of the cloud of darts around them, and rushed up to the assault.

At the same time, the largest of the moving towers having arrived at the wall, let down its drawbridge upon the battlements, which the knights crossed; the besieged ran to prevent them from descending, and a horrible strife took place in mid-air. The moslem scimitars were broken against christian helmets, and nothing protected the former against the trenchant battle-axes which cleaved their heads, and buried themselves up to the handle in their flesh.

Berenger could scarcely moderate his joy, and he was ready at each moment to cheer on the crusaders; but the mahommedans made a tremendous effort, and united to hurl the assailants from the wall.

“Arms!” cried the prisoner—“Give me arms!”

The Franks renewed their ardor at the king's voice; they replaced their scaling-ladders, and ascended again, under a torrent of boiling oil and melted lead; they gained the parapet on all sides, and put the Saracens to flight, maintaining their footing a second time. Hope revived in the heart of Berenger.

“Ah! if I were there!” murmured he.

There was among the Franks a warrior who surpassed all others, both in his courage and in the height of his stature. Standing with his foot propped against the parapet, he struck high and low, and spread death around him on all sides.

When the besieged approached him in too great a number, he took his sword between his two hands, and raising it to a level with his face, he cut down all that surrounded him, and left an empty space in front.

The crusaders scaled the walls all around; they made their attack with so much fury that the Saracens recoiled, unable to stand the shock.

“On—on!” shouted Berenger. “The city is taken!”

The Caliph himself became alarmed, and let these words escape him: “What are they waiting

for? We are lost! Have they betrayed me also?

But his fears were soon dissipated, and the smile of triumph reappeared.

“Ah ha!” said he to his prisoner, “Was I not right? Is not gold a solid rampart?”

“Shame!” answered Berenger—“Shame on the cowards who betray their brethren and their friends!”

The largest tower of the crusaders had taken fire, and only appeared now in the centre of a mountain of flame. At this signal, the Greeks beat a hasty retreat, leaving their allies alone, and exposed to all the efforts of the Saracens.

Excited by the example of their king, the French still fought with heroic bravery; but the word “treason” circulated through their ranks.

They began to hesitate; their valor left them, and their blows were enfeebled. They gave way at last; and Louis the Young, the last on the enemy’s rampart, overwhelmed with shame and rage, leaped in his turn from the wall.

Indignant at the treachery of his allies, Louis raised the siege on the morrow. The knights, before going away, marched around the city, and challenged the Saracens to open fight. But the

Caliph forbade his officers to expose their lives uselessly; and after this defiance, whose barren glory could not disguise their flight, the crusaders retired with a haughty air, and in good order, in sight of the Moslems, who dared not disturb them.

CHAPTER V.—IN BONDAGE.

WHEN they had disappeared on the seaward horizon, and when the wind had swept away the clouds of dust that marked their retreating footsteps, the Caliph said to his prisoner :

“Glory to Allah! the land of the Frank is a fine country, is it not?”

“It is for one who returns to it glorious and triumphant——”

“But if victory is impossible?”

“Then it is better to die?”

“Now hast thou seen that the breath of the Most High has scattered the pride of the infidels. They will not come here to break thy chains. Has their flight convinced thee of the folly of thy hopes?”

“The French imprudently put their confidence in traitors, and trusted their honor to their enemies.

As soon as the news of this disaster shall reach our provinces, millions of brave men will rise with indignation, and rush hither to avenge it."

"Fifty years have passed away since the waves first bore to our shores the warriors of the Cross. Before the arrival of these avengers, thy bones and mine will be mouldering in the grave."

"Blessed be God! If I can no longer shed my blood for Him, I hope that Our Lady will take pity on her servant, and obtain for me that God may be satisfied with the little I have done, in expiation of my sins."

"I admire thee, in truth! What! thy God forsake thee while thou art fighting for Him! He delivers thee up to slavery and captivity, and yet neither His treachery nor His ingratitude can weaken thy blind fanaticism."

"Is not His mercy extended to me even in my prison?"

"Ah! it is to Him thou wouldst give thanks! And have I no title to thy gratitude? However, when my soldiers brought thee hither, vanquished, drenched in gore, bound hand and foot, it was not the Cross that saved thee from torture and death. My religion enjoined me to exercise towards thee the right of war, and to slay thee. And if chance

had put me in thy power, what mercy wouldst thou have shown me?"

"I have never made prisoners; the Saracens could never endure my approach. They strove only in speed against my courser."

"And if I had entered?"

"Thou wouldst have been stretched in the dust, like the others."

"The populace thirsted for thy death; the blood of my soldiers which thou hadst shed cried against thee for vengeance; the imaums enjoined me to deliver Islam from so dangerous a foe. I refused to listen to every suggestion. But this is a trifle; if I had not banished from thy bedside the angel of darkness, who had already covered thee with the fatal shadow of his wings, thou couldst long ago have discovered, in the other world, that Mahomet is the true prophet of Allah. But I would not permit thee to die; I would not even have thee exposed to the contagions of the hospital. I brought thee into my own palace; my own physicians employed, to cure an infidel, the secrets that we owe to the true believer, Averrhoes. It was fated that thou shouldst die, but it was fated that I should load thee with presents and favors, and that thou shouldst be insensible to thine obligation."

“Adore Christ and I will follow thee unto death !”

“Fanatic ! wouldst thou have me adore a God who allows His own people to be slaughtered ? If He exists, would He not crown your arms with victory, and would He not be His own enemy if He permitted those to perish who were fighting in defence of His empire ?”

“This crusade did not deserve to succeed since there were so many traitors engaged in it.”

“But hast thou deserved thy fate ? My protection has preserved thee hitherto from the sufferings and evils consequent on captivity, but if I withdraw my hand——”

“I never begged anything at thy hand.”

“Dost thou not know what will happen ? Dost thou not know that, left to the derision and insults of the mob, thou wilt become the sport of their resentment and rage ?”

“They have fled before me long enough to gain boldness to insult me.”

“It is that which will stir up their anger—when they fear thee no longer, and can outrage thee with impunity. Listen to me ; expose not thyself to bear the weight of slavery ; expose not thyself to fall beneath the yoke of a pitiless master, who will

condemn thee to hard labors, who will bring thee down to the level of those wretched beings who drag out a miserable existence, harnessed, like beasts of burden, to wagons and carriages——”

“I am a freeman and a noble ; I can wield the lance, but I will never stoop to servile labors.”

“The rod and the scourges will make thy spirit pliable.”

“They are weary of life who would lift a threatening finger against me.”

“I have dungeons deep and dark ; hunger and thirst will outdo thy pride.”

“War is a stern teacher ; I have learned to despise sufferings and privations.”

“Art thou not afraid to irritate me by thine obstinacy—art thou not afraid lest my anger may execute my threats too soon ?”

“I fear God, for I feel myself humble in His sight.”

“For the last time—wilt thou embrace islamism ?”

“May God confound Mahomet and all who put their faith in him.”

“Let thy destiny be accomplished !”

“As he left the palace, Berenger thought he saw his esquire, dressed in the costume of the country. He called to him in a loud tone :

“Rayboul!”

The man continued on his way without turning his head.

A little farther on, passing through the market-place, he heard sounds of lamentation and groaning. Raising his eyes he perceived an unhappy slave on his knees before his master, who was beating him with rage. Berenger could not stand this sight. Overcome with pity, he forgot the threats of the Caliph, rushed upon the mussulman, seized him by the throat, and threw him down.

The slave begged mercy for his torturer. The Baron de Montier released his grasp, and with regret let go the Saracen, who gazed upon him with terror and respect, and fled without daring to complain.

“Our Lady will reward thee for thy compassion,” said the slave. “I am a christian like thee, but I am not worthy to suffer in this place of martyrdom. It was here that all the faithful were slaughtered that were surprised by the Arabs when they seized the city. It was here that the hand of St. John Damascene remained nailed the whole day, three hundred years ago. It was here that the Caliph massacred all the prisoners that he was able to take.”

The crusader pensively moved away.

At the gates of the palace that the Caliph had given him, he found a troop of soldiers who put him in irons. He was without arms, and made no resistance. They led him to the house of a gardener, who lived in the suburbs.

The gardener was a large and robust man ; he had six sons as vigorous as himself. After having exchanged some words with the soldiers that the Provençal did not understand, he took his slave into the garden.

He placed in his hands an immense hoe, and ordered him to use it. The baron only half understood the language of his master ; he took the implement, however, although resolving never to lower himself to the employment of serfs and plebeians.

The gardener repeated his order in louder tones, accompanied by an impatient gesture. Brutal, gross and confident in his own strength, when he saw that the christian would not obey, he resolved to curb his spirit at once, and he struck him across the face with the handle of his whip.

At this servile chastisement, the pride of the southern blood boiled in the veins of the crusader. Furious, unable to control himself, he flew upon his

master, and grasped his throat with such violence that he strangled him.

At this sight the gardener's sons, who were working not far off, ran to assist their father, armed with their iron gardening tools, and they rushed upon the christian to kill him.

Berenger saw them coming; he had been accustomed to fight without counting the number of his adversaries. He awaited their approach with firmness, using the hoe as a mace. He whirled it round his head, defended himself, cut down some and put the rest to flight, remaining master of the field.

After this battle he left the gardener's house, and in spite of the weight of his chains, made his way towards the gates of the city.

But he was surrounded and stopped, and, by the order of the *cadi*, he was taken and cast, bound, into prison.

CHAPTER VI.—THE RENEGADE.

THE narrative of these events inspired the Caliph with a still more violent desire of perverting the baron. He flattered himself that the solitude and weariness of a dungeon would bring down his pride; he also forbade food to be given to him for three whole days.

After this time had elapsed, the imam was sent to him. The moslem priest bowed to the famishing prisoner of the fowls and pleasures of the mus-hometan paradise. But Berenger remained immovable, and answered:

"If your hours resemble the dancing girls that I have seen, I prefer the blue eyes of Etiennette; and as for the nectar they drink in your heaven, I doubt if it has the flavor and relish of the wines of Provence."

"Thou still hopest to return to thy country! Dost thou not know that the gates of this dungeon will never more open for thee?"

"Perhaps, but I have a protection somewhere that will assist me when all other resources fail. Then thou wilt see things that will astonish thee."

"Thou art valiant in the fight, but thy wisdom is not equal to thy valor. Thy companions have been more prudent. They have acknowledged the truth of the koran, and, rewarded by the beneficence of the Caliph, they enjoy in peace the happiness that heaven grants, even in this life, to those who believe and keep his law."

"My companions are not knights of noble blood. If they have perjured their faith towards God, they are recreants and cowards. I pity Mahomet to have such people in his service."

The inmate exhausted in vain all the artifices of his eloquence. The baron had no ears for him, and would listen neither to his reasonings nor to his solicitations.

However, the deprivation of air and exercise began to weaken the constitution of the crusader. Painful sores were formed upon his limbs by the rubbing of his chains. His strength began to fail, and he fell, little by little, into a morbid languor. The burning climate of Asia soon changed the wounds on his arms and knees into ulcers. His legs became inflamed, and myriads of insects, generated in the darkness and stifling heat of the prison, crawled over his body, and left him no repose, either night or day.

The soul is united to the body by mysterious ties and close sympathies. Moral suffering reacts upon the organs of the body, and reciprocally even the least maladies of the same organs affect the moral being. The character of the crusader became enervated as he lost his vigor. While thinking of his position, it appeared to him most frightful. He formed the hope of escaping from his dungeon, and cast about him for the means.

He did not believe himself any longer bound by his parole, and he would have fled without scruple this land of temptation and suffering. But they were thick and deep—the walls of the subterranean vault in which he lay. The daylight entered only by a narrow loop-hole, guarded by heavy bars of iron, so well fastened that he tugged at them a whole night without succeeding in loosening them.

As these thoughts engaged his mind, a man whom he did not recognise at first, on account of the darkness, was introduced into his cell. But when a lamp was brought, and his visitor was placed face to face with him, he distinguished the features of his esquire, Rayboul.

"Is it then?" cried he, making an effort to rise. "Do I not deceive myself? How dost thou come here? Ah! how sweet to see a friend again, after

being so long surrounded by none but enemies and strangers! What art thou doing in this city? What is become of thy companions? What has happened to them? Are they still faithful to the Cross? Are they still alive? Oh! answer me; it is so long since my ears have heard the sounds of our sweet mother-tongue!"

"Alas! my lord —my good master—in what state do I find thee! Defeated, covered with ulcers, and dying! Is it possible that the most valiant of the French barons should have fallen into such an ocean of evils, and that I am forced to compassionate him who was the terror of the proudest warriors of Europe!"

"Yes; I am no longer the haughty Baron de Montier. Thou seest nothing before thee but an unfortunate prisoner. We have lost all by the fickleness of fortune; but we have no cause to blush; our honor still remains to us, and we are still christians. For thou art a christian still, art thou not, in spite of thy dress?—all my esquires and men-at-arms have kept their oaths?"

"Thy 'squires and thy men-at-arms have not broken their oaths."

"Are they less wretched than I?"

"They will never again see the sun of Provence.

"I saw them cast headlong from the minarets of the great mosque; and, the night following, their bodies were devoured by dogs in the street."

"Then death was noble, and as glorious as it on the field of battle—how didst thou escape their fate?"

"My fortune, my lord, saved me from the jaws of death at the very moment I was about to share their fate. But what tales I heard of thee! They said that thou enjoyedst all the favors of the Caliph—that he made thee sit at his table, and gave thee his eldest daughter in marriage."

"Knowest thou the price I was to pay for those treacherous benefits? I was asked to deny the Cross and adore Mahomet."

"It was a desperate extremity; but what in the use of obstinately resisting a necessity to which we must all one day submit? Pickram and suffering always end by forcing us to yield."

"Forcing me! am I accustomed to break my oaths?"

"It is breaking them only to save thy head."

"Is it not breaking them to deny Almighty God?"

"Heaven may be gained in any religion, provided we follow its precepts in sincerity."

"I am not such a learned theologian? I only

know what the chaplain of Montier says—that heretics, miscreants and persons excommunicated will be inevitably damned, unless they are converted. And even if thou knowest this truth better than he, there are two loves which I can never banish from my heart—the love of Etiennette, baroness of Montier; and that of Our Lady, the Queen of Heaven.”

“What will it signify to thy lady, the baroness, whether thou remainest true to her love or not—she will never see thee again. And as for the Virgin, if she values thine homage, let her work a miracle to help thee preserve thy faith.”

“I can ask it of her, at any rate.”

“She will not hear thee. Dost thou not see that God abandons us, and does nothing for us? The commanders, our brethren, instead of helping us, have not even inquired into our fate, and have fled like cowards. What hope remains to us now?”

“To die without dishonor, and without remorse!”

“Glory does not follow a man into the tomb. Once stretched on the bed of death, the memory immovable of past exploits is but a slender and sorry consolation.”

“It is now twenty years since my father girded me with my first sword. He died a few days after,

and I have not forgotten his last farewell words : 'I leave thee,' he said, 'an untarnished name. Be hardy, brave and loyal ; and know that if ever thou stainest thy escutcheon by an action unworthy of thy race, I will break the stone of my tomb, and return to chastise thee.' Being then master of my own conduct, I could easily have grown old in my castle, in the lap of idleness and pleasure. But I contemned the seductions of sloth—I placed my happiness in enduring hunger, fatigue and danger, and if I have by these efforts acquired a little renown, I am not come here to spoil it all, and to cover myself with opprobrium."

"The most valiant knights do not think themselves dishonored by surrendering when they are compelled by the fortune of war. Captivity is our enemy. We have resisted as long as we could. Honor is thus satisfied. We may acknowledge ourselves vanquished."

"Never!—they took my arms from me ; I never yielded them up."

"What phantoms obscure thy mind ? Of what use is thy heroism ? To whom will it be known ? We are dead to France, and our resolution, whatever it is, being unknown to our fellow countrymen, will be equally exempt from blame or praise."

"Could I conceal my cowardice from myself? Could I dishonor the shades of my forefathers? When they appear to my imagination, and demand an account of their good name, what should I be able to answer them?"

"That thou hast yielded only to the irresistible force of circumstances, that fortune is to blame, not thou, for the crime, if it be one. But what obligation is there to quit actually the fold of Christ? Can we not continue to adore Him in the secret of our hearts, while outwardly we follow the ceremonies of the Mahometans? What will it cost us to pretend to comply with their wishes, and go to their mosque?"

"Those are the counsels of a villain!"

"My lord, I love thee, and it is my attachment that inspires my words. I cannot bear to see thee perish miserably in this dungeon, as long as it is only thine own fault that thou art not raised to the summit of power and honor."

"Let others make traffic and sale of their souls. Life is a burden when it is stained with ignominy."

"My lord baron, do not be misled by vain empties. Save thyself, whilst thou canst; do not expose in this prison. The Caliph offers thee his friendship, do not reject it. To-morrow, perhaps,

the opportunity will be gone. Do violence to thy feelings—thou wilt thank me for this by and by. If thou canst not resolve upon it, thou hast only to let me act for thee. I will promise for thee; and thou wilt not disavow my promise. As for remorse, let not that frighten thee. It is a mere fancy—I have never felt it."

"Canst thou have trampled on the Cross of thy Saviour?"

"Heaven has rewarded me for it, since then I have been rich and honored. I have a splendid home, treasures and dignities. Modems of the highest rank have given me their daughters in marriage."

"Traitor and miscreant! Thou hast broken thine oath, and gloriest in it! Thou boasted of it before me, and shame does not choke thee! Oh, that I were not chained!"

"Moderate thy pride, lord baron, I advise thee; and, instead of threats, address to me entreaties. I am thy jailor, and I have over thee, in my turn, the power thou hast so long made me feel. Thou shalt change thy faith, Baron de Montfort, and thy perjury shall justify mine, or, by the fire of hell, the most frightful tortures—!"

"I laugh at thy fury. My body is in thy power,

but not my will. I will show thee the difference between the soul of a baron and that of a hypocritical, lying serf. I fear thee not, and God, who is just, will lengthen my life to witness thy chastisement. It will be, amid my sorrows, a consolation and a relief."

Frightened, in spite of himself, by these imprecations, Rayboul, astounded, left the prison with trembling steps.

CHAPTER VII. THE TRIUMPH OF THE FAITH.

THE renegade kept his word. To the sufferings that the prisoner already endured, he added the much more cruel torture of his cowardly insults. He could not pardon Berenger for his fortitude, as it was the condemnation of his own apostacy. He wreaked on him the vengeance of his own remorse, and displayed towards the faithful christian a refinement of barbarity which made the Moslems themselves shudder.

The prisoner opposed nothing to his rage but a disdainful courage. But sometimes his countenance lit up with a look of such terrible meaning, as he

fixed his eyes upon those of his jailor, as to make the latter turn pale with a fear that pierced the very marrow of his bones.

The Caliph cursed the constancy of his prisoner, but he could not help admiring him. When he thought of the contempt with which Berenger treated his offers, spite and fury took possession of his mind ; but then the secret hope of eventually perverting him appeased his resentment. Undetermined, vacillating, he racked his brain to invent some means of gaining him over, and still could find none.

“This Frank is not of the same flesh as other men,” he said to himself. “Any one else would have given up long ago ; but he must be mine, no matter what it costs. I will try again to persuade him, and if he refuses—well, woe to him ! Nothing shall hinder my vengeance. He shall perish.”

He went down into the prison.

The baron lay immovable upon the damp ground, a prey to an agonizing fever, and to the gnawing pains of the ulcers that were eating him away. All his strength was gone, and enfeebled, nerveless, he had become indifferent to existence. He did not look up at the noise which the door made in turning upon its heavy hinges. He did not stir, and

the Caliph gazed upon him a moment with compassion.

“Unfortunate man,” said he, bending over him, “art thou not yet tired of suffering? What insane obstinacy pushes thee on to destruction? Open thy eyes! I bring thee salvation.”

“There is no more salvation for me upon the earth. Death has already placed his heel upon my breast, and I have no wish to escape him.”

“He was still nearer thee on that day when my soldiers took thee, covered with gore, from beneath thy horse’s dead carcass. Thou mayest yet hope for life, for my physicians can bind thy wounds with healing herbs that will cure them in a few days.”

“Why should I desire a cure that will only prolong my misfortunes?”

“Ah! now I see that all thy pride was but a mask. Despair has entered thy heart, and thy courage has given way.”

The prisoner was aroused by these reproaches; he started up suddenly, and shaking off the numbness which had fettered his limbs, he replied in a stern voice:

“When hast thou ever seen me cowardly and

disloyal, that thou shouldst have the right to despise and outrage me?"

"I am come to try now whether thy soul is not quite dead to glory and ambition. For many years I have been amassing immense treasures in my palace. The caravans have not carried them all away. I have taken care to assemble around me the most valiant soldiers of Arabia and Asia. By an astute system of political intrigue, I have kept up quarrels among all the neighboring princes. I have connived at rebellions and revolutions in their cities. Carchem, Tarran and Bagdad only wait for the signal to open their gates to me. It depends on my will alone to extend, in less than two years, my empire from the banks of the Tigris to the mouth of the Nile. My armies are ready to march, they only need a general. Wilt thou lead them to victory? Thou shalt choose for thy reward whatever kingdom thou pleasest, be it Egypt or be it the throne of Constantinople itself, I will furnish thee with all the gold and men necessary to make thee master of it, and thou hast only to reap what I have sown and ripened."

"I will not make war upon christians, I have sworn to defend them till death."

"Thou wouldst say, thou art afraid to fight. Thy false pride only serves to cover thy degenerate soul. A didst would suit thy worn out arm now better than a lance."

"Command that my chains be stricken off, and set me against the bravest of thy knights. I defy them, on foot or on horseback, with the battle-axe and sword, in whatever enclosed field thou shalt choose."

"Thy defeat would be no triumph; thou art not worthy of the rank I offer thee. I had not known thee."

"It is not danger that I fear; it is apodacy. Thanks to God, my memory will never be burdened with the reproof of cowardice."

"So thou dost decide to brave me to the last?"

"I will not sell my faith."

"I will leave thee still one night to reconsider thy resolution. To-morrow, at daybreak, the executioner will bring me either thy conversion or thy head."

"Why put it off? the night will not change my mind. Let me be slain to-day."

The Caliph went out. The imam received him at the door of the prison, and accompanied him to the palace, and he excited the Caliph's wrath so

skillfully, that he sent for one of his guards immediately to cut off the head of the prisoner.

Berenger did not expect to be put to death before the morrow, and he had not yet prepared his soul to appear before his Maker. Nevertheless, he was on his knees when the soldier entered, praying to God, and particularly to the Blessed Virgin.

He rose and approached the executioner with an angry mien, shaking at him his manacled hands.

"What dost thou here?" asked he, in a threatening tone. "Dost thou dare to look Berenger de Montier in the face?"

The soldier had been engaged in several battles where that redoubtable name had been heard with terror. The remembrance of it, the tall figure of the baron, the fury of his voice, the darkness, the loneliness, and perhaps, also, the secret interposition of the Mother of God, struck the executioner with alarm, and froze his limbs. He hesitated, trembled, and like him who was charged to kill Marius, let fall the sabre he held, and fled precipitately.

"Strange!" cried the Caliph, on receiving this news. Then, after a little reflection, he continued

“To-morrow, I will have him cast from the top of the mosque.”

His eldest daughter happened to be by his side.

“If my father would permit,” she suggested, “I will attempt, in my turn, what no one has been able to accomplish.”

“Thou ! but he is a hardened fanatic !”

“Allah is great, and sometimes a woman finds words that bewilder men and make them pliable. To-morrow, if I fail, thou canst execute thy resolution.”

“I will give him to thee for a husband,” said the Caliph, “if thou canst make him abjure the cross.”

We must not be astonished that a Caliph should authorize his daughter to take so hazardous a step. The seclusion of Mahometan ladies is not so rigorous as is generally imagined. Besides the liberty they enjoy in the interior of their houses with their slaves, the zeal for proselytism excuses the impropriety of these interviews, and permits even the spouses of the chief of believers to converse with strangers without a veil.

Those who have paid any attention to the chronicles of the crusades know that Saracen princesses have frequently, and with impunity, played the temptress in this manner. Thus, in the legend of

Notre Dame de Liesse, we read of the daughter of the Sultan of Cairo descending, by the command of her father, into the dungeon where three brothers Hospitallers are immured, who, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, convert even her who had come to induce them to apostatize. Similar tales are found in many histories, which it would be unnecessary to cite here.

The young lady called her attendants and dressed as for a festival. When she had finished the details of her toilet, and had satisfied herself with the glitter of diamonds hanging from her ears, and pearls around her neck, she smiled with pride at the reflection in the mirror, and murmured, as she left her apartment :

“He will be blind indeed if he does not admire me.”

Meanwhile Berenger, who had just, without knowing it, escaped from certain death, after the flight of the executioner sank upon his knees, and, for want of a priest, confessed aloud to the walls of his dungeon.

“Most Holy Mary, my lady and mistress,” said he, in his prayer, “I beg and beseech thee very earnestly, for the love that I have always borne thee, to plead the cause of my salvation when God,

my saviour and sovereign, shall examine into the crimes and disloyalties I have committed against Him. I pray thee also to make known my deccase to Etiennette, my good wife, that she may have prayers and psalms recited for the repose of my soul. I do not ask of thee to free me from captivity ; there is no longer any means ; but if, by a prodigy of thy bounty, I behold ever again the shores of Provence, I give thee my word as a baron and a knight, that I will build thee, on my lands, a chapel of white marble."

Suddenly a brilliant light shone around him, and a young lady, in dazzling costume, her head covered with jewels, appeared on the threshold of his prison. Risking the infection from his wounds, she approached him and stood by his side, saying, with smiles, and in a caressing tone :

"I am the Caliph's daughter, whose hand thou hast disclaimed. I thought that, after seeing me, thou wouldst no longer slight my beauty."

"Daughter of the Caliph, thine alliance tempts not my desires. I have placed my heart higher than thou canst ever reach."

"But behold me ! Dost thou not find me lovely ? What raiment, then, do the ladies of France wear ?"

"Thou hast not even the noble and modest sim-

plicity that encircles the brow of Etiennette. And since thou art not equal to a mere baroness, judge if I can prefer thee to the Queen of Virgins, who unites all perfections in herself."

"Whatever may be her advantages, has she, like myself, the power to rescue thee from the torture that awaits thee?"

"Assuredly, but I do not desire that she should; death will put an end to my sufferings."

"Has all thy courage left thy heart, and has the sweetness of life departed from thy lips? Thou hast suffered, but thy sufferings may be blotted out. Open thine eyes to hope! A mighty future extends before thee, and the years that remain to thee will be long enough, by my father's assistance, to conquer a kingdom."

"The only kingdom to which I aspire is the kingdom of God, promised to those who repent of their sins, and die invoking Him."

"Death is a sad bride; and knowest thou the death destined for thee?"

"Whatever it be, I prefer it to thy love."

"Oh!" cried the princess, in a violent rage, "could any one do me a more flagrant injury? I come to save thee, and thou answerest my goodness with insult and contempt. No! thou shalt obtain

the bride thou desirest. Far from imploring pardon for thee, I shall hasten thy torments."

Berenger, left alone, applied himself again to prayer. Then, oppressed by an unconquerable desire to sleep, he laid his head on the dungeon stone and was soon in the land of dreams.

It seemed to him that an angel entered the vaults of the prison, and bending over him, unbound, in silence, his manacles and fetters, touching his ulcers and curing them. The prisoner thought, also, in his dream, that the angel lifted him in his arms and carried him through the air so quickly as to take away his breath.

At last the wings of the celestial messenger relaxed their speed, and, extended and hovering, they struck the air no more, nor moved, except to moderate the headlong descent. The earth soon appeared, and Berenger, still asleep, beheld himself laid upon a bed of fresh moss, under the shadow of a gothic castle.

He began to awake, and the memory of the dream remained so fresh in his mind that he dared not open his eyes for fear that the sweetness of the illusion might add to the horror of the reality.

The well-known sound of a bell surprised him, and completely awakened him. He looked around.

Oh, marvel! the walls of his prison had disappeared; a green landscape spread before him its undulating carpet of verdure; his chains no longer weighed him down; his hands, free and untrammelled, were lifted to Heaven in gratitude; he bounded with joy; he entered his castle, and the first person he met was the Baron de Montfer.

Thus is the winding up that the tradition of this country assigns to this story—we have not desired to strip it of the miraculous coloring. Nothing would be easier than to explain the facts by natural means—a ransom; an exchange of prisoners; an escape; even, would not be open to the criticism of the most skeptical and incredulous; but in our opinion it would spoil the legend, of which the marvellous is the essential and distinctive character. However it may be, the chapel built by the Baron de Montfer still exists, and bears testimony to his gratitude towards the Blessed Virgin, to whom he attributes his deliverance.

NOTRE DAME DU GAVET.

CHAPTER I.

THE aspect of the penins of Brittany is singularly picturesque. In the evening, when the darkness of night is gradually spreading over them, and their brown tint, fringed with gold, makes them stand out in bold relief against the empurpled sky, one would take them at a distance for the massive pillars of a temple built by the hands of titans. The howling of the wind, and the low roaring of the sea, resemble the confused murmurs of an assembled multitude.

Night crowns their summits with gloom and mystery. The moonlight casts their lengthened shadows on the plain—gigantic—well defined—immoveable! One would fancy them the phantoms with which bards have peopled their songs. It might be imagined that the spirits of Celtic heroes were passing through the mists of the night, and appearing with shadowy strides on the tops of the cliffs.

It is well known that these provinces were for a long time the centre and the asylum of druidical worship—a sublime worship, it must be acknowledged, appropriate to the spirit of heroism and adventure which distinguished a people who gloried in withstanding the fury of the waves, and braving the thunderbolt.

Christianity had succeeded at last in driving the sanguinary divinities of druidical worship from this, their last, retreat; but the strife was tedious. The Celts loved their superstitions. They had always been accustomed to venerate their sacred altar-stones, and to listen to the predictions of the druidesses, and to the mystic chants of the bards.

For a long time after the conversion of the country, sorceresses preserved their hold on the popular belief. The morn at length rose upon this ignorance, and the gospel dissipated the shades of superstition. Or if there were still some few weak minds who clung to the old fear of the evil eye, or put their confidence in the efficacy of certain formulas, the lord of Sostang, at least, knew nothing of these terrors.

Still he could not pass through these mountain gorges without a vague feeling of inquietude. He instinctively put spurs to his horse, which, already

exhausted by the length of the journey, scarcely had the strength to finish it, and fell again into a weary amble whenever his rider relaxed the application of the stimulus.

The nobleman was brave, and, except Almighty God, was afraid of nothing in the world. He had no enemy but the rival claimant with whom he was at law. And since he lived according to the laws of Christ, rendered exact justice to his vassals, and never encroached upon the rights of others, his conscience was burdened with no crime, and he suffered no remorse.

Nevertheless, he hastened to leave these cliffs, which seemed to threaten and to pursue him. He thought he heard strange sounds; the wind moved the tops of the trees with sinister whisperings. If he raised his eyes, he imagined he beheld on the pyramidal shafts of the rocks fantastic figures, like the spectres of demons.

And yet, what should demons have to do in a country so long penetrated by religious truth? Did they come to weep for the fall of their empire, and sigh over their abandoned altars?

Ah, no! The people have long since forgotten their pagan divinities. Hell has had time to console itself for the loss of homage paid to Tarann,

to Heutha, to the frightful Tentates. It would rather glut revenge by weakening the true faith. For misfortunes had passed over these provinces — civil war, pillage and devastation. The blood of the worshippers of the ancient gods, having been spilled through so many wounds, was now exhausted.

But piety had suffered by these calamities. Sanctuaries raised to the memory of saints and martyrs had been ruined, and the poverty of the peasantry prevented their rebuilding them. At a short distance from the demesne of Sostang, there was formerly a chapel of Our Lady. What had become of it? The walls had crumbled slowly away, till scarcely one stone remained upon another. There was no trace left of arches or of pillars. A thicket closed the way to it. Ivy and other creeping plants covered what remained of the masonry, assisting the work of destruction by their luxuriant vegetation; and brambles had burst through the crevices of the flagstones that had formed the pavement.

The place would have been no longer distinguishable, if the devotion of the villagers, surviving the ruin of the edifice, had not taken care to preserve the altar. They still continued to come there to

invoke the Mother of God, who, retaining also her regard for the spot, continued to receive their vows and listen to their prayers.

She was honored there under a title dear to the peasantry. She was pleased in this place to confer her favors upon little children. So that, for more than sixty miles around, mothers were accustomed to frequent the shrine of "Our Lady of the Cradle." *Gavet*, in the Breton language, signifies a child's cradle.

The hope of the homestead, the blessing of marriage, innocent and tender infants, what anxieties and cares you cost us! What prayers your parents pour forth for you into the bosom of God! You suffer—they suffer in you, and would be willing to deliver you from suffering by taking it upon themselves. They importune heaven, and do it violence by their sacrifices, and by the fervor of their vows.

The altar of Mary was always covered with presents. Some brought the first fruits of their harvest, in the hope of obtaining a blessing on them; others hung around it the first products of their orchard, in thanksgiving for benefits already received.

They had learned from their ancestors to venerate the ruined chapel. Tradition said that during the crusades the barons of the country had brought

back from Jerusalem the cradle in which the daughter of Joachim had slept in her infancy, and had placed it upon this very altar.

As he passed by these ruins, Philip de Halegoët experienced a sort of terror. The wind howled mournfully through the foliage of the trees. The bushes seemed to wear fantastic forms. The night-birds flew with fright from their hiding-places, and beat the air with heavy, noisy wings. His horse hung his head with sadness and drowsiness as he ambled along.

Philip never beheld the dilapidated chapel without emotion. But the demons, enemies of the worship of the Mother of God, had rendered the rebuilding of the sanctuary almost impossible.

No doubt the neighboring peasantry were ready enough to impose taxes upon themselves, and to make collections for this object, but they were so poor that the greatest sacrifice on their part would not have been sufficient to build one of the walls.

The lord of Sostang, who alone of all the country would have been able to rebuild the edifice, for many years had been engaged in a vexatious lawsuit, and had no idea yet of the time when he might hope to see the end of it.

It was about a tract of land of moderate extent,

which was part of the inheritance of Lady Claudia de Barrin, his wife, whose right to it was disputed. The affair was simple, and, in principle, easily enough decided; but the lawyers and counsellors had so embarrassed the whole matter, that both of the adversaries had commenced to doubt of their own right to it.

They had exhausted all the means afforded by law, and, from one court to another, the affair had been finally referred to the parliament at Rennes.

There, since the counsellors were more experienced and knowing, they enveloped the procedure in new difficulties, so complicated that the unravelment was hopeless. One took his stand upon the written code, another opposed to it the custom of the country. Despairing of success, the fictions of the law were brought to bear on both sides, and the judges, bewildered, undecided, not daring to pronounce sentence, let the cause go on, hoping that the parties would finish by coming to an understanding, when the inheritance itself was exhausted.

In fact, the expenses were already very great. And Philip, who was not willing to divide the land, was beginning to fear that the lawsuit would consume even his own demesne of Sostang, with his manor house and his whole estate.

CHAPTER II.

Four days after, as the lord and lady of Boudung were taking a little morning exercise on horse back, their horses brought them by chance to the deserted chapel. Lady Claudia, who was very pious, dismounted, and giving the bridle of her palfrey to her husband, knelt before the altar, and devoutly offered a prayer to Mary.

"Do you not think, my lord, that it is shameful for us to allow a chapel, built upon our lands, in which Our Lady has wrought so many miracles, to be overgrown thus with brambles and weeds? As for me, I cannot suffer it, and if you will permit me, I shall begin collecting the money necessary for rebuilding it."

"You are right, I know, and the same idea has occurred to me several times. But the state of our affairs precludes our thinking of so great an expense."

"This lawsuit which causes you so much anxiety, will it never come to an end?"

"I fear not."

"It would cost more money than would suffice to rebuild this sanctuary."

"Most assuredly."

"Do you know what we ought to do? Let us place the affair in the hands of the Mother of God. She will be our advocate and plead for us. If she gives you the advantage, you will consecrate to her the price of my lands, and restore her chapel."

"With all my heart; and I feel myself her debtor already."

"You solemnly promised her this?"

"I swore it."

"May Our Lady," continued Claudia, "hear the vow you have pronounced! If she wishes her chapel to be raised from its ruins, it is for her to give you the means of keeping your word."

"May she claim my promise from this very evening."

The lord of Hocking and her adversary were connected by blood. The origin of the lawsuit had depleted the whole family; but when their relations saw the obstinacy with which each of the parties maintained his right, and the ruinous expense incurred about a matter of disproportionate importance, they raised their voices against it on all sides.

Many efforts were made to reconcile them, and to restore good feeling between them; but both were so irritated that each refused alike to lend an ear to any proposition of arranging the matter, and the attempts were fruitless.

"Time," thought the peace-makers, "will exhaust this enmity. They will tire of going to law. Weariness and care will make them long for a settlement. Let us wait!"

The moment appeared to have arrived, and new steps were taken to arrange a compromise.

The lady of Sostang thought she saw in this the hand of the Blessed Virgin, and energetically begged her husband to put an end to the quarrel. Philip, indeed, showed no reluctance to withdraw his pretensions, and accepted, for the sake of peace, all the clauses that the arbiters deemed equitable.

But, on the other side, there was found so much obstinacy and ill-will, that the design was obliged to be abandoned.

"You see how it is," said Philip to his wife. "Our Lady releases me from my promise."

"It seems to me, on the contrary," answered Claudia, "that she will prove the part she has taken in the matter more remarkably, by causing your right to be declared by parliament."

Few men are capable of retaining within their own breasts the feelings that possess them. Whatever the state of our mind may be, in joy or sadness, it reflects itself upon the creatures that surround us, and gives a new color even to inanimate objects.

The cliffs overhanging the roads along which the lord of Sostang was riding had no longer anything in his eyes of gloom or menace; the moon shone in the splendor of her light from the midst of a pure sky, and the stars were pale in her brightness, as in the presence of the orb of day.

The rocks, broadly illuminated, appeared covered with a robe of white gauze. Upon their peaks, lost in the sky, were no longer the monstrous figures of the dark spirits of the night that Philip had formerly fancied he could trace; it seemed to him rather that radiant angels were assembled there in adoration.

In the distant murmur of the waves, in the sighing of the breeze, in the rustling of the foliage, he heard the voice of prayer, and the echo of holy hymns.

Even his horse, as if a part of his master's joy had been communicated to him, galloped on with

unwearied bound, snuffing the free air with elevated nostril.

When he passed by the ruins of Our Lady of the Cradle, lord Halegoët uncovered his head, and bowed low ; no bird of the night was awakened by the noise of his horse.

Before setting foot in the court of his castle, he shouted to his footman :

“Run and tell lady Claudia that we have gained the suit !”

“Yes, my lady,” said he, when they met, “the parliament has decided that the land lawfully belongs to us ; and it must be that the Blessed Virgin has herself pleaded in my favor ; for neither has any new proof or argument been produced, nor have my lawyers uttered a syllable.”

“We will not be ungrateful, and we will accomplish our vow—shall we not, my lord ?”

“We will begin its accomplishment to-morrow.”

When the villagers knew of the intentions of their lord, they wished to co-operate according to their means, by devoting all their spare hours to laboring upon the chapel.

They undertook the building of one of the wings, a neighboring monastery claimed the honor of

erecting the other, and the main body of the edifice alone was raised at the expense of Philip.

The sum which he had resolved to consecrate to it was reserved for the embellishment and decoration of the sanctuary.

An architect offered the benefit of his talents, without asking any remuneration but the glory of working for Our Lady.

Animated by the gratitude of the lord of Sostang, the work advanced rapidly. Did the money in his hands begin to fail, his friends begged the honor of lending him even more than he asked. He had the consolation of living to assist at the ceremonies of the dedication, which was fixed on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the patronal feast of the little church.

The principal altar is dedicated to the Mother of God; the two others are placed under the invocation of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne.

The lord of Sostang gave to one of his sons the title of Sacristan of Notre Dame Du Gavet, showing by this that he deemed nothing more glorious than to be in the service of the Queen of Heaven.

The faithful assembled in crowds from all the neighboring provinces. Old men told the wonders of which they had been witnesses in their youth,

and each one hoped that the miraculous time would come again.

Their confidence was not deceived. The reverend mother of Blemurr asserts that at the moment she writes, the prodigies have not been interrupted.

THE BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE Roman theatre had reached its last decline. The histrionic art had never in the queen city of the world reached the height to which it had risen among the Greeks. Delighting in the sanguinary tragedies of war, the republic found insipid those heroic pictures that charmed the inhabitants of Attica. The comic muse, as portrayed in Terence and Plautus, was never popular; to amuse this populace of freedmen something more pungent than witticisms was needed. Even in the time of the elder Cato, the people loudly hooted obscure farces, and they loved neither tragedy nor comedy, naval shows nor chariot races; they delighted in the sight of blood, flowing from the wounds of gladiators, butchered to make a Roman holiday, or streaming from the mangled limbs of christians

Nero, after having terrified the Romans by his dramatic successes, as a rare holiday sport, devoted their city to the flames; but his favorite amusement was to make flaming torches of the bodies of the christians.

But at the time of our legend, this refinement of cruelty did not yet exist; yet the crowd, even then, rushed with eagerness to the circus whenever the faithful were to be delivered to wild beasts. They were no longer contented with having the holy martyrs torn by tigers; but even while they were in chains they overwhelmed them with the most insulting revilings.

The christians were happy in the midst of these persecutions, for God changed these abusive words into pearls and diamonds, and formed of them the starry diadems with which His glorified saints were crowned. But what pained these holy ones far more than the torments of martyrdom, was to see the august ceremonies of their faith turned into ridicule; not alone by freedmen and slaves, but by the buffoons upon the stage.

No one was more successful in acting this foul part than Archien—hence he stood high in favor with the populace. His very appearance on the stage was sufficient to excite the wildest shouts of

expiring in agonies of torture, prolonged until the strength of their tormentors was exhausted.

admiration from every tier of seats in the amphitheatre.

Ardelion possessed fine talents, and he had no equal in the art of provoking laughter. His contemporaries compared him to Roscius; but he was much more learned.

On a certain day, the martyrdom of a band of Christians, in the public circus, was to be precluded by a farce, composed expressly to ridicule the mysteries of our holy religion. Ardelion, as usual, was to play the principal. But to write this farce it was necessary to know those mysteries; and this was not easy, for the faithful concealed with care their religious rites.

Among Ardelion's slaves was one called Tertius. He knew well that she was a christian; her modesty and dignified conduct sufficiently distinguished her from other women of her condition; but he had hitherto feigned to ignore her religion, on account of the edicts which would have obliged him to denounce her to the judges. He had several times sought to draw her into conversation on the subject; but Tertius, fearing some profanation, had always evaded his questions, and, with

out appearing ashamed of her faith, had baffled his curiosity by vague replies. Knowing well the constancy of the christians, he felt assured that he could not obtain any information by threats or severity ; he therefore resorted to duplicity and falsehood.

"Tertia," said he to the slave, "I have heard of the doctrines of the christians ; they appear to me to be beautiful, but I am not yet sufficiently acquainted with them. I do not know why, but I feel thoroughly impelled to embrace their faith. But can I not first receive further instructions ? I fear, should I engage myself irrevocably, without a perfect understanding of the subject, to find myself pledged to absurd and impious doctrines."

"Our enemies," replied the slave, "spread these reports to ruin us ; you will find in our worship only what is good and pure. If your wish is sincere, I will present you to our learned men ; and I am sure, when you know our belief, you will abhor the abominations of idolatry."

"Well, good Tertia, you will lead me to them ; but will they not despise my profession ?"

"We despise no one. The kingdom of heaven is open to all—to whomsoever is able to gain it."

"Will they not forbid me to appear on the stage ?"

“When you have become a christian you will regulate your own life ; no one will constrain you.”

“After all, if they should exact it, it would matter but little ; I am tired offering myself every day to the laughter of the foolish crowd. But, then, if I visit your learned men, I shall be counted among their disciples. I value my head, and I have no wish to lose my life.”

“Baptism will free you from these fears. He who has been fortified by it, far from fearing death, desires and implores it.”

“Yes, that is what I have often seen, and I cannot comprehend it. What, then, is this baptism, which has such power, and so completely changes the nature of men?”

“It is the first of our religious rites, by means of which we are transformed from children of darkness into children of light.”

“Ah, it is doubtless some grand feast, where you are served with magic beverages and enchanted meats?”

“Oh, no ! It consists only in pouring pure water on the head, and pronouncing the sacramental words.”

“Cabalistic words ! I supposed so ; invocations to earth and hell.”

"We invoke God alone. Earth and hell are the works of His hands ; we are not permitted to invoke them. We are baptized in the name of the triune God—of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

"Are there no other ceremonies?"

"That is, at least, the only necessary one."

"What! is no more needed to transform men, and change the weak and timid into heroes? As soon as they have thrown a little water on my forehead, shall I become capable of braving every torture?"

"Yes, and if your faith should ever waver, you could always strengthen and re-establish it by our other sacraments."

"And what are they? Those secret, mysterious festivals for which you are reproached?"

"The hatred of our enemies alone forces us to celebrate them in secret."

"Do you there drink rare wines which inspire your courage?"

"We drink a mysterious wine; but I am not free to reveal our mysteries. If you seek the truth, come; you shall learn all our doctrine."

"Let us wait a little while. To become a christian, now-a-days, is to seek death. It is good to think twice."

“At least I beseech you not to abuse the confidence which, perhaps too lightly, I have reposed in you.”

“I fear not, Tertia ; I shall not betray you.”

Yet, in spite of this promise, Tertia bitterly repented her indiscretion. She vaguely felt that some misfortune would come of it, and she was filled with sad forebodings, which were soon realized.

She heard that a magnificent spectacle was to be represented in the circus, where christians were to fight with wild beasts ; and before their martyrdom Ardalion and other buffoons were to caricature their religion. At this intelligence Tertia was overwhelmed with grief and remorse. Hastening to the venerable priest who had baptized her, she confessed her fault, with many tears, and following the good man's counsel, she fasted and prayed to expiate her guilt.

In baptism she had taken the name of Mary, and she now invoked with fervor the patron to whom she had been given, conjuring her to enlighten her ignorance, and teach her to repair the scandal caused by her involuntary error.

✦

CHAPTER II.

It was on the eve of the day marked for the triumph of the saints. Ardelion, standing before a mirror of brass, was practicing his comic gestures, when Tertia entered his apartment, and, without uttering a word, threw herself, bathed in tears, at his feet.

"What is the matter?" impatiently exclaimed the actor. "If you have been guilty of a fault, be resigned to receive the lash, and leave me in peace."

"I have committed a great fault. Alas! would that I could repair it by submitting to any bodily pain whatever! Only listen to me, my master."

"Not now---not now! do you not see that I am engaged?"

"What I have to say to you cannot be delayed, and it concerns my salvation."

"The actor had neither heart nor soul, and his natural sensibility was increased by a willful hardening of his conscience. But there was in the ac-

cents of Tertia a grief so profound, so real, that in spite of himself he pitied her. "Speak," said he, "but be quick; what do you want?"

"I implore you not to perform in derision our holy mysteries. I should be guilty of your sacrilege."

"Humph! And is that all you had to say to me?"

"Oh, my master, I entreat you!"

"Why, you should be grateful to me for making your mysteries known. Perhaps," he continued, mockingly, "I shall gain many proselytes."

"Alas! if you could but represent our faith in truth."

"Never fear; your God will be enchanted with the glory I shall throw around Him."

"Beware, my master; he is not deaf and powerless as your idols are. When He rises He is terrible. And to this hour no one has mocked him without punishment."

"Ha, indeed! He has, then, become powerful since His death, for it is certain that He was not able to save his own life. Besides, what is there to fear? He will laugh at my jests, and if He is a wise God, he will know how to turn them to advantage."

“He has power to do so ; but you will still be guilty of the blasphemies you pronounce. Oh, I beseech you, do not provoke Him ! Renounce this applause, which may cost you too dear. You have fame enough. God will reward you for this little sacrifice, and in recompense, he may even open your eyes and admit you among His children.”

“Well, well, Tertia, that is enough for the present. Leave me and I will think over it.”

Mary retired in despair ; she passed the night in prayer, accusing herself, and imploring pardon of God.

When the hour arrived at which Ardelion, in his litter, was carried to the theatre, the slave placed herself in his path. She spoke no word, but by her attitude, her imploring look, the actor knew what she would have said. But the litter-bearers passed on, and he soon forgot his christian slave and thought only of his part. Once, in looking back, he fancied he perceived in the distance a woman whose figure resembled Tertia's.

He entered the circus and hastened to his chamber, where the slaves rejoined him and aided in robing him.

Meanwhile Mary, urged by despair, became reckless of her life. She fled from her master's house,

without knowing whither she was going. Guided, doubtless, by an instinct from on high, she arrived, in hurrying through the streets, at the house of the manager of the games.

A sudden resolution seized her, and entering, she addressed him :

“ Sir, I, too, am a christian, and I come to combat the wild beasts.”

“ Unhappy wretch, what fury leads you to destruction ? Who are you ?”

“ I am a servant of Jesus Christ. Open the lists for me, that I, too, may win a crown with my brethren.”

“ Take back your words, else I cannot refuse your demand.”

“ Hesitate no longer ! I have trampled under foot the orders of your emperor, and despise the gods of the empire.”

“ Reflect a little longer. You are young ; life is sweet. You may repent when it is too late.”

“ I have already reflected, and am now ready ; I worship Jesus Christ, and Him only.”

“ Since you will die, you shall take the place of her who died last night. This will stop the people from murmuring about being cheated out of one of their victims, for the number will then be complete.”

So saying, he caused Mary to be led into the prison, where were already assembled the elect of God—those whom His mercy had selected to enter, that day, the kingdom of their Lord, and share the royalty of Christ.

Four victims were found in that dreary dungeon ; Mary made the fifth. On entering, she saluted them :

“ The Lord aid you with His strength.”

“ This day,” answered an old man, “ we shall bless Him together. Who art thou, my daughter ?”

“ My brethren call me Mary ; in the world I am Tertia, the slave of the actor Ardelion.”

“ Give thanks to the Son of God, O Mary, for thou art not far from victory, and thy brethren shall envy thy triumph. How has heaven brought thee into the arena ?”

“ Alas, father ! I here seek an expiation. Martyrdom is a reward which thou hast merited. I beseech thee, pray for me.”

“ Whatever thy crime hast been, thou canst hope it is pardoned thee, since thou hast been led here.”

At this moment their jailor entered to lead them to the arena. He conducted them to its utmost limits, close to the barriers, that the cruel populace

might feast their eyes on their destined victims. Shouts and cries of savage joy saluted these meek saints. The wild beasts, in their cells, echoed the roars of human beings, as cruel and merciless as themselves. Mary shuddered, but she lifted her heart in prayer.

After having, in this manner, presented them to the crowd, their executioners led them to the centre of the circus. Then the old man spoke to them :

“ My children, we are blessed among men, that God has thought us worthy to shed our blood for Him—who died for our sins. We trust not to our own strength. Pray the Lord to give us courage, and defend us from all weakness.”

He began to recite the prayers of the Church, and, with lowered voices, the others followed him. At this moment, the confused sounds of the eager crowd were suddenly hushed, and all eyes were fixed upon the stage. Ardelion appeared, and a tumultuous burst of applause, from all parts of the theatre, saluted the favorite of the populace.

Around the sanded space which bore the name of arena, was erected an iron balustrade, too high to be cleared by beasts of prey in their most furious bounds. A wide gallery, pierced with several doors, separated the spectators from this inclosure.

Beyond this gallery, and overlooking it, the seats arose in regular terraces, forming an immense horse-shoe, the two ends of which touched the stage. The whole building was open to the sky.

The throne of the emperor was prepared in the centre of the seats, opposite the stage. His gilded chair was placed upon a magnificent platform, covered with gold-embroidered purple cloth. On seats below the emperor were grouped his principal officers.

It was at the foot of this throne that the fatal blow was given, after their defeat, to those unfortunate gladiators whom the people, in their caprice, condemned to death by the well-known signal of turning down their thumbs, and here it was that the little band of christians stood.

Notwithstanding the immense dimensions of the circus, it scarcely sufficed to contain the eager and impatient crowd which thronged every terrace of seats in the amphitheatre, and there was not an empty place in the ranks of the consulars or patricians. The martyrs remained standing in modest, but fearless attitudes, and they sustained with a holy courage the insulting jeers and the malignant frowns of the ferocious multitude. Conspicuous among the little group was their priest and leader,

Aritus. He was an old man, and familiar with suffering. He had already undergone the apprenticeship of the combat, and the glorious scars of the tortures he had suffered were not yet healed; his body was maimed and bruised, but his soul was invincible. He confronted, with a calm countenance, the dreadful fate now approaching him - a fate which he had long desired and implored. Two brothers, whom he had baptized, and who had shared the labors and fatigues of his ministry, had been found worthy of also sharing his triumph. They were still in the bloom of youth, and they would have regretted being called so soon from the vineyard of the Lord, were they not about to confess Him so gloriously before men. The fourth victim had been the most highly favored of God. A laborer, called at the eleventh hour, he had been baptized on the eve of his arrest, and now he was to exchange the white robe of the catechumen for the empurpled garment of the martyr, with no higher claim to this grace of heaven than his fervor and his innocence.

CHAPTER III.

THE shouts of applause had died away. The crowd, panting and intoxicated with joy, awaited breathlessly the first accents of the comedian whom it idolized. When the slave, Mary, perceived her master, her head sunk on her bosom, and the tears slowly coursed down her cheeks. The good Aritus saw them, and fearing that her courage was failing, he gently exhorted her :

“ Bride of Christ ! raise thine eyes towards heaven, where thy spouse awaits thee ; soon, in thy wedding garment, shalt thou sit at the marriage feast of the Lamb.”

“ My father,” sobbed the penitent, “ thou who hast received the power to bind and loose, say, will He judge me worthy of a place at His table ?”

“ Fear not, my daughter ; when thou shalt have passed through this second baptism, thou shalt appear before him pure as His angels, who have never sinned.”

“I have dishonored His worship ; I have given up His holy mysteries to opprobrium and mockery.”

“Will God refuse thee pardon when thou shalt have given him this bloody proof of thy faithful love—when thou shalt have sought him through the gates of violent death? Behold the confidence which animates thy brethren! Already have they forgotten this life. Already their souls, nearly loosed from these garments of flesh, enjoy, in anticipation, the rewards of martyrdom.”

“They have no cause for remorse. They have not caused the profanation of our holy ceremonies.”

“If thou hast done so, my daughter, it was not with intent to sin ; thy thought was not of sacrilege, and God will not punish thee.”

“No, no, I have not willfully sinned ; I was deceived ; I too easily believed a false word. I could not foresee the consequences.”

“If thou hadst sold our holy manuscripts, the diligence of our brethren could repair thy fault.”

“God grant that my crime be no greater. All the insults which the actor, Ardelion, shall pour forth upon us, it is I—it is I who have taught them to him ; it is I who have betrayed to him the secrets of our august mysteries.”

"Since he deceived thee by his hypocrisy, thou art not accountable for his impiety."

"I spoke without thought; I knew not what I was doing."

"Calm thyself, Mary, and wipe away thy tears, lest the idolators believe that thou tremblest. So long have we endured mockings and ignominies that we care not for them. Are we not blessed when men spit upon us and revile us? Shall we heed the vain words of these jesters? Moreover, is the power of God limited? Can He not turn to His glory the blasphemies of his enemies?"

A burst of laughter, from all sides of the amphitheatre, drowned their voices. The martyrs mechanically turned their eyes towards the stage.

Two actors were before the audience. One counterfeited the sacred functions of a priest. He wore the national costume of the Jews—a people always despised in Rome, and absolutely odious there since their base revolt and dispersion. The pagans affected to confound the faithful with the Hebrews, and surrounded both with the same ignominy. Here the actor exaggerated to the utmost the squalor natural to the descendants of this unfortunate race. His robe was composed of many pieces

of different colors, worn out and filthy, as if gathered from a kennel. A grotesque cap ornamented his head, and a neglected beard hung on his breast. He walked barefooted, his face bent to the ground, casting to the right and left gloomy, sidelong glances. In his hand he held an ill-shaped wooden cross. Ardelion was not less sumptuously clad. He wore a coarse toga, of the stuff used by the poorer classes. His head, feet and arms were bare.

If the stage, as it is said, is the mirror of manners, it is but a false and lying mirror. It lies by exaggeration; it lies by caricature; it lies by calumny.

It was not the design of the actors to represent truly the belief and ceremonies of the early christians. Degenerate as was this Roman mob, it would have been filled with surprise and admiration at the holy majesty of our faith. In order so to turn catholicity into ridicule, in ancient times as well as at the present hour, they had recourse to calumny and immorality. The actors boldly lent their imaginary principles and manners to the christians, covering them with a ridicule for which no causes existed, in reality. But they suited their jests to the tastes of the people. They did not

pique themselves on Attic wit, but whoever has read Aristophanes will know what must be understood by that word ; and the vaunted cultivation of the Athenian writers is now reproduced only in the most immodest songs. The present impious farce was composed of the most obscene jests and allusions, accompanied by disgusting gestures. Omitting these features, which I should blush to reproduce, I give the following scene :

“ My fine fellow,” cried the other buffoon, approaching Ardelion, “ stop a moment and listen to me. Your face pleases me. I never saw you before, and already I am interested in you. I should like to make your fortune. What is your trade ?”

“ I am a slave.”

“ Very good.”

“ No, it is not very good ; it would be much better if I were a master.”

“ You shall be one if you will give yourself to me. This meeting is fortunate for you, since I seek by choice the dregs of the people. Would you like to become rich ?”

“ Rich !”

“ Would you like to possess more of gold than you ever dreamed of before ?”

“ Where can you get it ?”

“Do you remember King Midas, who turned to gold everything he touched?”

“The man who had asses’ ears?”

“Well, I can perform the same wonder before your eyes. If I pronounce a certain word, this city and everything in it, even the sand in the streets and the filth in the gutters, will become fine gold.”

“How?”

“By magic. You know we are all magicians.”

“Don’t you fear that your ears will grow longer?”

“I desire it; mine have been cut off, and ever since I have been making vows and prayers that they might grow again.”

“What! you are a sorcerer, and yet you permitted your ears to be cropped?”

“Permitted! I swear to you that it was without my permission, and in spite of me, that it was done.”

“It was at this repartee that the audience had uttered those shouts of laughter which interrupted the conversation between Mary and the priest. The attention of the assembly was also drawn away by the entrance of two foreign ambassadors, of a nation whose name was then, for the first time, brought to Rome; they were vandals.

When silence was restored, the actors continued
“And do you hear better now?” asked Ardelion.

“No ; not much, at least.”

“And yet, without ears, do you make gold ? At what rate do you lend it, for it is plain you do not keep it.”

“If I kept it, I would not promise to give it to you.”

“And on what conditions will you give it to me?”

“Oh, a trifle ; just to take a single bath.”

“But,” said Ardelion, smelling him, “a bath would not hurt you either. How dreadful you smell !”

“That is because it is a long time since I took one.”

“Why so, if you are rich?”

“Because our religion commands us to be dirty, and shock decent people. That is why we neglect our hair and our nails.”

“And must I, too, sleep in a barrel?”

“Well, yes, from time to time. You must also abstain from eating the flesh of victims offered to the gods, and from swine’s flesh.”

“And what will you give me in place of them?”

“First you shall drink a magic nectar, which will

fill your veins with delicious intoxication, mingled with dreams and ecstasies. Maddened by the draught, you will be plunged in pleasure so intense, so exquisite, that you will forget everything beyond them."

"But why do you celebrate your feasts in darkness and privacy?"

"Because if celebrated in daylight the sun would be darkened with horror."

"Truly you excite my curiosity; and to obtain these delights what must I do?"

"Adore the Cross."

"I am afraid it will end in my being nailed to it."

"We can guard you from that by our enchantments."

"And yet you scarcely ever die any other death."

"That is because, having exhausted the cup of pleasure in our mysteries, we become disgusted with life. Besides, we have charms which enable us to bear the worst torture without suffering."

"I should prefer to be preserved from them; experience might not quite fulfil your promises."

"Well, you must determine whether you will accept my offer or not."

"It tempts me. Is there anything else to do?"

"You must insult the gods ; you must treat Jupiter as an old reprobate, and the goddesses as infamous courtesans."

"Oh, that's easy enough !"

"You must believe there are three and yet but one God."

"Yes—four."

"No, no ; three and one."

"Very well ; or suppose I believe nothing, which is easier still."

"Well, let us go to the bath."

"Oh ! you can just as well take it here."

"What ! before all these people ?"

"My son, first of all you must renounce modesty. I will bring some water ; I have then only to pour it over your head."

"You will then come down with your money ?"

"More money than you know what to do with."

"I demand a hundred thousand million sesterces."

"You shall have two hundred thousand millions."

He seized an urn from the sill of a door in the scene, filled it with water, and returned immediately.

"Where did you get this water ?" cried Ardelion.

"It will not wash—it will soil my head."

"Bend your head, I say, and close your eyes. When you open them you will be entirely changed, and you will see that I have not deceived you."

The buffoon emptied on the head of Ardelion the urn which he held ; Ardelion started back, and leaped about the stage with cries and gestures which elicited shouts of laughter.

"Well," cried he, "the money!"

"Not yet ; you moved too soon. I had not pronounced the cabalistic words. Your impatience has rendered that washing useless ; we must begin again."

"Why, I am already wet to my bones ; the water is running off of my clothes."

"Do not be in a hurry. I must fill my vase again."

"Now," he resumed ; "let us take it quietly. What ! now, have I forgotten the words ? Oh, here they are ! 'I baptize thee, in virtue of this water, in the name of the Triune God—of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Now do you see the riches you are to receive?"

To God all things are possible ; a light of inspiration overspread the countenance of Ardelion, and his eyes were fixed on the deep blue sky.

"I see," he cried, in the thrilling accents of ear-

nest conviction, "I see the heavens open, and angels beckoning me and offering me a radiant crown."

"I foretold it, continued the other actor, not, however, without a startled and uneasy air.

"I am a christian," cried Ardelion; I go to meet the angels."

The spectators wildly applauded, and laughed tumultuously.

"The baptism of water," said the new convert, solemnly, "will not suffice. The baptism of blood is necessary to purify my soul."

The people again clapped their hands.

Transported with holy enthusiasm, the actor continued:

"I take back all the falsehoods I have uttered, in this infamous farce, against the God of the christians, who alone is the Creator of the universe, and I humbly implore His pardon through the sacrifice which I shall make for Him."

At these words, he leaped into the gallery at the foot of the stage, cleared the grating and ran to join the other christians. The people, who loved him, called out to him, "Come back; we have laughed enough. Come back! they are going to loose the beasts!"

But he no longer listened to them.

"Refuse not," he cried to the martyrs, "to admit me amongst you, unworthy, though I am, of sharing your victory. And thou, Tertia, be blessed, for it is through thy prayers that the grace of God has saved me."

"I prayed to the Virgin," meekly answered the slave.

"Thou shalt no longer bear the name of slave when thou hast shown me the way to liberty. Receive the stroke of enfranchisement."

The populace, irritated at the conversion, uttered bloodthirsty howls, and clamorously demanded the appearance of the wild beasts. The vandals rose in their seats, tossed their giant arms into the air, and roaring with savage joy, they summoned the actor to return. He refused with a generous pride. The martyrs intoned a psalm, and in a quarter of an hour after they had received the palm of victory.



FROM THE PRISON TO THE STAKE.

CHAPTER I.

THE two criminals presented the most striking contrast. One was small and stout, and his limbs, which were powerful and in admirable proportion, gave evidence of prodigious activity. His countenance, although swarthy, was regular and intelligent; his moustache was long, thick, and extremely brown; his hair was oily, and flat on his forehead, and fell upon his shoulders. At a distance he looked handsome, but on closer inspection the spectator felt a kind of horror creep over him. His bold features expressed cruelty, at once cold, deliberate and refined; his eye was as keen as an eagle's, with all the fascinating and overpowering steadiness of the serpent's. His voice was mellow and insinuating; he could impart to it a resolute, imperious and cutting accent, but in his ordinary conversation it possessed something feline and

treacherous. Moreover, his pronounciation detracted much from the beauty of the harmonious accent of Provence.

His demeanor and gestures told of a character given to dissimulation. He was daring, but cautious; capable of laying a deep plan, and, when matured, of executing it with as much rapidity as he had shown deliberation in adopting it. He belonged to the Basque race, which inhabits the declivities of the Pyrenees and the mountains of Biscay; an indomitable people, born of the union of Celtic and Iberian blood. The Roman eagles pounced upon their village, but could not establish themselves there. Augustus never succeeded in subduing these tribes so passionately fond of freedom. Charlemagne lost the bloody battle of Roncevaux in his encounter with them.

Christianity did what conquerors could not effect—it subdued them, without weakening their character. When the Moors overran Spain, they presented an insuperable barrier to their progress; and the true faith, which sought shelter among them, there recruited itself, and found soldiers and arms sufficient to secure it a final triumph. Sou-driol adhered to the costume of his country—a red cap covered his head; a little rounded vest re-

vealed the lines of his shoulders ; a broad cincture of scarlet cloth girt his loins and part of his chest ; ribbons of the same color bound the extremities of his *braguette* above the knees ; on his feet he wore leathern sandals, fastened by strong thongs around the instep.

Soudriol was chief of a band which was much dreaded. His companions were so many slaves to his slightest beck. They knew that he was inflexible in his will, and implacable in his hatred ; they knew that his arm was irresistible, and his eye sure, and that the weapon never swerved in its aim from his hand.

Having been brought up in the mountains, he had the nimbleness of the chamois. Whether in mounting a roof, climbing up the side of a rock, swimming over a river, passing the yawning gulf of a precipice, or creeping like a serpent under a bush—nothing daunted him. If an expedition terrified the bravest of his companions, he would claim for himself the honor of undertaking it, and generally brought it to a successful issue. Moreover, no crime deterred him. His thirst for carnage knew no satiety ; women and children never found mercy from him ; he ever longed for blood, and found an infernal pleasure in steeping himself in crime.

Bouillac, on the contrary, although at first sight more repulsive, was in reality much less ferocious. A tear, a prayer, a word, often sufficed to disarm his wrath, if necessity did not compel him to be relentless. He was not naturally cruel ; he required to excite himself, even to make an effort, when there was question of murder. Nothing short of wine and the encouragement of his comrades could induce him to commit it ; and after the bloody deed had been perpetrated, he detested it, and in spite of himself fell into sadness and despair. But his was a barren despair, which never prevented him from repeating his crimes when the occasion presented itself.

Having been abandoned by his parents, he was received by some monks, and educated in a monastery. The wicked passions of youth drove him from his asylum, and gave him over to a band of robbers. But he never entirely forgot the instructions of the monks, and often, in the anguish of remorse, he felt himself drawn to renounce the life he was leading, and return to the monastery which he had left.

What a strange abuse of religion ! When Bouillac meditated some bold and dangerous stroke, he always prostrated himself in a little chapel dedi-

cated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He did not beseech her to turn him from his crime ; he implored success. And, as if she could possibly allow herself to be led into complicity by the offer of some earthly recompense, he promised her part of the booty ; and he always reserved some ornament or jewel from the spoils to be placed upon her statue.

He respected priests and religious. He had even moments of generosity and kindness. Many a time he acted as guide to the pilgrims who had lost their way in the mountains during the darkness of the night. It is even said that poor peasants received liberal alms from him. This report, which was rendered more probable by his affability to the villagers, and his leniency towards his prisoners, earned for him a sort of popularity in the rural districts.

He did not intend to die impenitent. He always hoped that the Madonna would not allow him to perish in battle before he had time to make his confession. He had resolved to do penance, but he dreaded the raillery of his comrades, and perhaps, also, the just vengeance of the authorities ; so he delayed. The rank which he held as head of the brigands was due less to his ability than to

his enormous stature, his strength, and to that ascendancy which physical superiority exacts from those who deem vigor and advantages of body the first of all virtues. His band was independent of that of Soudriol; nevertheless, both were friends and allies, and they often united when any very difficult expedition was to be undertaken.

The tasks were then divided. Bouillac was unfit for strategy; he was not capable of watching an entire night in ambuscade, in order to pounce suddenly, like a roaring panther, upon the affrighted and terror-stricken travellers. Soudriol chose that part of the work. Bouillac led the attack; he avoided no danger; shunned no difficulties; he overcame all obstacles with so much impetuosity that the adversary was deprived of all thought of resistance. Bouillac was tall, and his hands, which were large and bony, were as hard as iron. The best-tempered swords shivered in his hands; he despised swords, and his only weapon was an immense club with an iron head.

His features were coarse, and his face square. His lips were thick and apart, disclosing enormous teeth, strong enough to crush marble. Beard, eyebrows and hair were red; stiff eye-lashes made a sort of bristly fence over his hazel eyes, and he

seemed cut out by nature to inspire terror. His dress was peculiar—he wore a cap of black cloth, a sort of jacket, and breeches descending to the knees. His monstrous legs and feet remained naked in all seasons.

The magistrate felt proud of his double capture ; and he had reason. During the last fifteen years these two ruffians had spread robbery, murder and consternation throughout Avignon. At length Providence had given them over to justice, and their punishment was to justify the long patience of heaven. The impunity enjoyed so long made them careless, and proved their ruin. Basque cunning was at fault ; and Bouillac, despite his strength, could neither save his friend nor himself.

In one of the suburbs of Avignon there was a tavern which was much frequented by rich travellers. The landlord of this tavern was in league with Soudriol's band, and to him the brigands owed some of their best-paying attacks. They had unbounded confidence in him.

One night they came to him to talk over some fresh crime. All three shut themselves in an upper room, and deliberated whilst they drank. Whether it was that the host had turned traitor, or that the servant who attended them betrayed them, it is

certain their wine was adulterated. Bouillac swallowed his bitter draught without suspicion. His taste had long been spoiled, and he found nothing extraordinary in the liquor. Soudriol drank more than once without complaint, but at last asking the inn-keeper about it, his ready answer put him off his guard. When the two robbers rose to depart, they found they could not, and they fell heavily upon the ground. At that moment the magistrate's archers arrived; they had no difficulty in binding the prostrate bandits, and carrying them to prison in chains.

They were judged according to the prescribed forms. All their crimes were known, but it would have been difficult to convict them. Fear sealed the lips of the witnesses. Everybody knew that they could not escape, but everybody feared their comrades, who were still uncaptured, and who, even then, were probably mingling in the crowd, listening to the depositions made, and marking out for future vengeance those who bore testimony.

The principal accusations numbered one hundred and twelve—murders, violations, sacrileges, nocturnal robberies; the list included every crime. In default of proof, recourse was had to torture. Soudriol remained firm, and maintained a dogged

silence, but Bouillac confessed his guilt. It was not that pain had triumphed over his courage. His body was inured to suffering, and many a time, in his career of brigandage, he had withstood wounds more severe than those he underwent. Although he accused himself, he nevertheless sought to justify his companion, by affectedly claiming for himself alone the plotting, commanding, and executing of all the crimes laid to their charge.

Their prison was not one of those low, damp, depressing dungeons which seem to have been built to inspire prisoners with a disgust for life, and to make them long for the hour of execution. They were confined in a turret, jutting off the southern angle of a convent; light and air were admitted through two barred windows, each three inches wide and one foot high. The pavement, which was of broad stone, connected the turret with the convent; there was no ceiling, and the vault tapered, like an empty cove, without beams and arches.

The only ornament on the walls was a picture of Calvary, sketched between the lattices: Jesus was dying, but His head had not yet sunk on his breast. The impenitent thief, on His left hand, uttered

blasphemies against the Just One, who was expiating the sins of men; Christ was turned from him, and was giving utterance to the following words of consolation to the penitent thief: "Amen, I say to thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Bouillae regretted that he did not see at the foot of the Cross her in whom he had put his trust, her whom the gospel represents as standing in deep sorrow beside her Divine Son.

The two robbers had iron chains on their feet; their hands also were bound, and a rope wound round the waist was fastened to a bar of iron driven into the wall. They could sit, kneel, lie down or stand up; but they could not walk more than one step. Not having straw, they lay on the bare ground. Soudriol suffered much in consequence of his recent torture, but his courage and spirit were unbroken. Bouillae, who had suffered less, was more calm, and his wounds were already healing up.

The Biscayan was near the door which opened from the turret into the monastery; the chapel was on the same side, and the prisoners could hear the monks as they chanted their office in the choir. Their captivity must have been rendered less painful by the thought that they were surrounded by

voluntary prisoners, who had done no wrong, and yet were to spend their entire lives there, looking forward to only one deliverance—that of death.

Bouillac spent much time in reflection. The years of his childhood came up before him ; under that vault, where the air was full of faith and piety, he dwelt upon the thoughts of his boyhood ; he acknowledged the kindness of Mary, who, at his request, had obtained for him time to repent, and, lest he should be deceived, had revealed to him the precise moment of his death, in order that he might have time to do penance. They did not know, it is true, the nature of the punishment they were to endure ; but their condemnation was certain. They were to perish—about that there was no question. But *how* were they to die ? They knew not, and, after all, what difference could it make ?

It was the second of July. Bouillac was still asleep ; the first rays of light were penetrating through the little air-holes, and were spreading themselves on the floor of the prison in pale spots, which gradually became larger, until the full light of day pervaded the entire prison. Soudriol sat with his back against the wall. He called his companion—"Bouillac !"

“Well!—what? Is it the hour already?” stammered out the giant, whilst opening his eyes.

“It is time to wake up and answer me; I am tired of silence.”

“Speak; I am attentive. But why do you not sleep, as I do? it is the best way to pass the time which remains. I had a dream just a few minutes ago. I thought I was on the mountains, singing psalms, and I never felt so happy before.”

“It would seem that you do not trouble yourself very much about your fate.”

“Not at all! I should like well enough to live a hundred years; but as it is all settled that we cannot do it, I do not see the use of fretting about it.”

“You talk about the matter pretty much as if there was question of merely taking a purse from a prostrate traveller.”

“Have we not been as near death any time during the last fifteen years? I do not care how grim he looks, he shall not frighten me.”

“Well, I am not much afraid either; yet, if I had the slightest hope of escaping, I would risk my life on it.”

“Bah! It must come to that, sooner or later; and is there not a night which is to be our last?

Let us have done with it at once. If the door lay open, I should not seek to escape."

"You astonish me. Formerly you were so brave, and now you are cast down so easily! Formerly you would have encountered hell; and now, that your hands are bound, you have neither courage nor energy."

"I am not changed; I believe that our end is at hand, and I do not see with whom I am to struggle hereafter."

"With the same enemy—with death!"

"I am tired of this life; I would not begin it again if I had my liberty."

"What do you say? What life could be better adapted for men of courage? It makes us independent, and dreaded as much as the most powerful potentates of the earth. Are we not kings and emperors in our mountains? Have we not our domains, which no one traverses without paying tribute? To become rich by our booty, to live by our pillage, to quit the scene and heat of the struggle, merely to enjoy the luxuries of victory! What lord, I ask you, has a better life?"

"Very true; but those pleasures are mixed with an alloy of incidents which spoils them. The painful tediousness of attending to wounds frequently

follows the intoxication of triumph. The tribute levied upon the traveller is often paid by the death of one of our comrades. We live free and independent of all laws, but we know that, sooner or later, the day must come on which we shall have to answer for ourselves to the laws and their custodians. This very thought detracts much from the charms of our independence. . . . Moreover, if we should escape the gallows here, there is above us a Magistrate from whom we cannot escape, and if He has kept a strict account of our crimes, He will accuse us of more than the magistrate of Avignon has against us."

"I am not afraid of that; once dead, let God do as He pleases. But you were talking of the gallows; do you really believe that they will hang us?"

"What do you suppose they will do else—unless, indeed, they drown us?"

"Let them do as they like. My mother told me, when I was a boy, that I should be hanged; but I would rather not verify that prediction."

"You will see that she was not mistaken."

"Perhaps. Yet, as long as there is life there is hope."

"I should like to know what you hope for. Are you not convinced that your irons are heavy

enough? Are you not aware that at every gate there are five or six archers, watching day and night, and that others guard every path leading from the monastery? Unless you pass through these lattices, and fly off like a bird, you shall never leave this prison until you begin your journey to execution."

"You are probably right; yet if I had the fatal knot tied to my neck, and saw the executioner by my side, I should never cease to hope whilst life enough remained to enable me to feel that I was not dead."

Soudriol then turned to show his companion why he indulged in such hopes, but an approaching footstep outside obliged him to resume his former posture.

CHAPTER II.

THE door was opened by a lay-Brother, who saluted them thus :

“Peace be to you.”

Soudriol did not move, but Bouillac returned the salutation by an inclination of the head.

The Brother was a man of about forty years of age, at most. His countenance was austere, but mild. From a reed basket which he carried with him, he took some bread, fresh vegetables and cheese. He divided the victuals, and, in silence, placed before each of the prisoners the portion intended for him. He also left them two wooden vessels filled with water.

“Don’t they give us a little wine?” asked Soudriol. “Water is tasteless.”

“The fruit of the vineyard,” replied the Religious, “is treacherous. It generates intoxication and delirium, and frequently proves the ruin of man.”

“We have had sad experience of it,” said Bouillac.

“If it causes intoxication,” added Soudriol, “I do not think, considering our present situation, that a little of it would do much harm in enabling us to forget the reality of our misery.”

“I shall mention your request to the Father Superior. I am afraid, however, that you must make up your mind to forego that pleasure ; the rule forbids us to have wine in the monastery. Besides, the time is so short that——”

“What ! has our sentence been pronounced ? What is our punishment ?”

“Judgment was to have been passed yesterday, but I cannot say to what decision the judges have come.”

“Yesterday ! Their judgment, then, cannot be carried into execution before to-morrow, so that we still have a day and a night.”

“Yes, my brother. The hours are short, and therefore precious, if you desire to prepare the defence you are to prepare before the great Judge.”

Soudriol became thoughtful. The Brother prepared to retire, but Bouillac detained him, and asked :

“Is there not a priest in the city who has the charity to visit us and reconcile us with God ?”

“Certainly there is ; and rest assured that you

shall not go alone to execution. When justice strikes, religion presses forward and seeks to console ; for religion is repentance and penance, and, consequently, hope and pardon."

"Yes, I wish to confess. My life has been bad enough, but I do not desire to die like a pagan."

Here Soudriol recovered from his abstraction, and asked the Brother :

"How long have you been in this monastery?"

"Alas! since yesterday only ; for what, in reality, are eight years consecrated to the service of God, when we consider that we owe Him every moment of life?"

"Eight years! that is a long time. And what is your present hope?"

"It is that God will grant me the grace to grow old in peace in this asylum, and die in the expectation of His mercy."

"You seem to be young still ; tell me, then, is it really possible to renounce all the pleasures of life at your age?"

"I have renounced the tumult, the cares and vexations of the world. I never knew what calm and happiness were until I entered the cloister."

"You must surely have suffered a great deal in the world. You must have endured hunger and

thirst, and all the evils of misery, when you bartered your liberty for the poor pittance you receive here. To my mind, poverty and independence are better than the slavery of the monastery."

"Yes, I had many severe trials when I groaned under the yoke of the world—trials so severe that I should have died if I had not here found refuge."

"Suppose you had the offer of as much gold as your heart could covet; suppose that all the allurements of wealth and luxury were presented to you, would you not feel disposed to leave this prison—for the monastery is a prison—a very tomb?"

The Brother raised his hands and eyes to heaven, but did not answer.

"Especially," continued the robber, "if there were hardly anything to do, and——"

"But who would give me the sum you promise?" interrupted the Brother.

"You shall have it from *me*. Just now I have not a piece of gold, but to-morrow, if I am free, to-morrow I shall have treasures; I shall have them carried to you on the day and at the hour you may think fit to mention. Trust my word, for I have never broken it. Perhaps you would prefer receiving some gold here a few hours hence?"

“No, my brother, no ! I have no wish to return to the world, even if it could make me happy. Those whom I loved are no longer on earth, and I do not expect ever to see them except in heaven.”

“But riches can procure other friends, and it is so easy to acquire wealth. I do not demand impossibilities. You have merely to forget to bolt that door when you return this evening. I ask nothing more.”

“Do not deceive yourself, my brother ; escape is impossible. If you were to leave this prison, you would fall into the hands of a group of archers, who would bring you back.”

“The difficulties concern *me* ; whether I succeed or not you shall have your reward, according to our contract.”

“Forget—forget these projects which you cannot carry out. Think only of delivering your soul from the captivity of the devil.”

“Oh, let me beseech you ! liberty is a great boon. I would give the rest of my life for one day of liberty ! I do not desire to die now. If I do not escape I shall die in impenitence, and on you shall rest the sin of my damnation.”

“No, my brother, no ; for if you do not repent—if you do not implore mercy—you alone shall be

guilty, and without excuse. Death is not taking you by surprise ; you are not summoned before the eternal tribunal without warning."

When the Brother had withdrawn, the Biscayan sat down, pressed his forehead, and gave himself up to reflection. Bouillae did not disturb him, but fixing his eyes upon the picture above his head, he prayed fervently.

"I shall do it!" exclaimed Soudriol, suddenly. He then threw himself upon the ground, twisting his breast and neck, and endeavoring to cut with his teeth the rope which kept him fastened to the wall. His companion looked at him in surprise.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Do you not see? If you had courage, you would follow my example."

"To what purpose? Suppose we succeed in cutting the rope, our feet will still be in shackles, our hands will still be bound behind our backs. We can neither flee nor defend ourselves against the soldiers."

"Let us first free ourselves from this rope."

"What is the use of fatiguing ourselves without gaining anything by it?"

"None whatever if you do not assist me. I require your help, and I expect it in order to——"

"Yes," interrupted the other; "if you can escape I am ready to aid you by all means in my power; but with regard to myself, I repeat that my mind is made up to remain where I am."

Soudriol resumed his work of tearing up the hemp cord, thread by thread. He had begun to gnaw it the previous night, but he was still far from having finished it. The conversation was interrupted whilst he labored at his task, except when he changed his painful attitude in order to take breath.

"Explain your project to me," said Bouillac; "I do not quite understand it."

"When the rope is cut I am free. I can then escape from this wall by——"

"Yes, yes; by hopping like a magpie you may walk about in this turret, and go through it as much as you like."

"It is then that I shall need your assistance. You have teeth strong enough to break one of the links of the chain which binds my arms; when my arms are free, I shall soon shake the fetters from my feet, and you, too, shall be free."

"But the door, the bars, the archers!"

Some minutes elapsed before Soudriol answered.

"My project," he said at last, "is as simple as it

is infallible. Here it is: the Brother comes, as usual, to see that everything is in order, and that we have all we want. The stair is of stone, so that we can hear the sound of his sandals when he approaches. When I hear him coming, I duck down against the wall; he comes in without suspecting anything; before he turns to shut the door I seize him by the throat, and floor him before he has time to utter a single cry."

"And it is thus you would assassinate a poor creature who has used nothing but kind and consoling words to us since we were cast into this dungeon!"

"Ah! just as if you had never throttled your enemies!"

"I never killed disarmed men. In the struggle they might defend themselves, and I never took lives excepting when risking my own."

"So much the worse! Why is he an obstacle to my liberty? Nevertheless, we can consider afterwards whether it is possible to save him."

"Yes, for he must not perish."

"If he is prudent—if he does not persist in trying to give the alarm, then——"

"I promise that he will be silent," said the other.

"Agreed! I have no dislike to him, although

he could easily save us if he had the will to do so."

"And if everything succeeds, how will you escape from the archers?"

"The Brother is about my size; when I put on his clothes imitate his gait and demeanor—yea, even his voice, if required—it is very unlikely that anybody will recognize me in the dark, or hold a lantern up to my face."

"Truly, Soudriol, you have great powers of invention, and were deservedly our leader."

"It is true that I leave you in prison, but——"

"I am satisfied; I am satisfied," interrupted Bouillac. "May my death satisfy for us both."

"That is not my plan. When I assemble my men we shall take arms and meet in a favorable spot. When you are traversing the road leading to the place of execution, we shall attack your escort, and during the tumult which must follow, all you have to do is to disappear."

Here a fresh noise interrupted the conversation. When the door was opened the Biscayan stood up, the better to conceal the rope, which he had almost entirely cut in twain. He assumed an air of indifference, but the perspiration rolled down his face, and his brown cheeks were inflamed.

The visitor wore the habit and cord of St. Francis. As he did not suspect that the prisoners had any notion of escaping, he saw neither the animation of Soudriol's features, nor the expression of discontent which contracted them. Bouillac, as soon as he saw the priest, uttered an exclamation of satisfaction and joy.

"You were expecting me," said the religious, in a voice of kindness. "I ought to have come sooner, it is true, but several causes delayed me until now. However, I shall not go away before night, and I shall be here again to-morrow by day-break."

"Do not listen to him, Bouillac!" exclaimed Soudriol. "He is a rogue and a rascal, and his only object is to insult us."

"Oh, my brother! you do not suppose me capable of such a thing. To insult you, now that you are prisoners—now that you are abandoned and unhappy—would be the depth of meanness. Far from adding to your sorrows, I would gladly sympathize with you, and offer you words of comfort."

"Hypocrite!" said Soudriol, "leave me. Your cunning shall be foiled; your honied words cannot deceive me."

"But," said Bouillac, what object could the father

have in deceiving us? It is but too easy to brow-beat us now; and if you were in his place, would you seek the company of two condemned men in a prison merely for the sake of so miserable a triumph?"

"You do not know them; he is sent to us in order to put himself in possession of our secrets, and thereby, after having put us off our guard, deliver our companions to the authorities."

"Do you, my friend, take me for the magistrate's agent? I am superior of this monastery; do you suppose that I would degrade myself by such an employment? No, no; fear not. Instead of seeking to draw from you the means of placing your comrades in the hands of justice, I am here in order to aid you in averting the divine wrath."

"Moreover," added Bouillac, "I did not betray any one when I was tortured, so that you have nothing to fear."

"You bore up against torture, but you cannot resist his insidious questions. Let him go away; we do not need him. We have lived like men; let us die as such."

"I do not, my friend, desire to make you a coward; on the contrary, my effort would be to sustain your courage if I saw you faltering. But there is

no cowardice in trembling before God. God is great, and the greatest rulers in the world are very small indeed before Him."

"Begone! I will not listen to you."

"I am here as your friend, and surely the presence of a friend cannot be disagreeable to you."

"It is; and besides, what do you come for? I shall not make my confession."

"But my desire," said Bouillac, "is to confess; therefore I pray you, father, not to leave."

"Are you cowardly enough," said Soudriol, "to tell your secrets to that inquisitor?"

"My friend, do you not know that the avowals made in confession are more securely buried forever in the heart of the priest than if you sealed them in an urn and cast them into the bottom of the sea? Do you not know that even in the dumb solitude of my own thoughts, I dare not dwell upon what you tell me as your confessor?"

"Dear me!" said Soudriol, ironically; "do you imagine that I believe you?"

"It has never yet been heard that a confessor proved false to the confidence placed in him by his penitents. Many priests have gone sadly astray, but they never lost sight of this inviolable law. Even in the transports of delirium, where there was

nothing to restrain the license of their language, the secrets of the confessional never escaped their lips. On the contrary, there have been some who preferred disgrace and death to the transgression of this obligation."

"Will you leave us in peace?" howled Soudriol.

"Soudriol," said Bouillac, "be so good as to allow me to die in the manner I think best."

"Fool! have you become such a coward? By all the devils in hell, I shall save you from your faint-heartedness, and I shall prevent you from dishonoring yourself."

Then, turning to the Franciscan, he heaped on him the most gross and violent abuse, seasoned with blasphemies and oaths. The religious bore this without rebuke and without emotion. He bowed his head with modesty, and waited until the storm should be over. His patience exasperated Soudriol. In the height of his rage, he closed his hands and ground his teeth; his eyes seemed about to start from their sockets; his hair stood on end. He would have darted upon the priest and strangled him if his irons had not prevented him. At last he remained silent, as his lips, which were covered with boiling foam, could not find words.

"Do you wish to converse with me?" asked the

*Franciscan, addressing Bouillac in a calm and gentle manner.

“I wish it very much, father, and I beg of you to overlook the words of my companion ; they are not his own words, but those of excessive anger.”

“It is easy for me to forget them, since I did not hear them.”

“You did not hear them !” roared Soudriol, with fury.

“You shall hear them now !”

He then commenced a fresh tirade, with increased rage.

“Did you hear them this time ?” he asked, when he had finished.

“No, my friend, for whilst you were speaking, I was imploring heaven to have mercy on you and convert you.”

Then, turning to Bouillac, and requesting him to look at the wall, he said :

“You have, I suppose, frequently observed that picture ?”

“Yes, father, I have thought a great deal over what it represents, and I have found great consolation in the reflection that, as God pardoned a thief who was no better than I am, He may also pardon me, if I repent as he did.”

Seeing that insults neither drove the religious away, nor disturbed him, Soudriol tried another plan. He sang a number of the most disgusting and obscene songs imaginable, so that the Franciscan had to throw himself on his knees and fold his hands. He thought that Soudriol would soon stop through fatigue; but the mountaineer had strong lungs, and for several hours sang a great many ballads, without repeating any of them. The religious was afraid that this horrid example might influence Bouillac.

"Perhaps," thought he, "my presence is an occasion of sin to the poor culprit, and it might be better to let him have quiet and silence."

After a few moments' reflection, he called the archers, removed Bouillac, and led him to another hall.

CHAPTER III.

BOUILLAC made his confession with all the signs of sincere repentance. When the Franciscan spoke to him of the infinite mercy of God, and declared to him, in the name of heaven, that all his iniquities were blotted out, the robber melted into tears. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "what penance could ever have acquitted me! How much reason have not I to return thanks to Mary, who has obtained for me permission to offer my life to God in order to cancel my crimes!"

"Yes, my friend, you shall make the sacrifice of your life to God, and an offering of your sufferings. If your sins have been enormous, the punishment shall also be great."

"I fear that my sufferings shall hardly be commensurate with my crimes. What is death? I have frequently not been farther from death than the thickness of a leaf; and I assure you that it is a great mistake to be afraid of it at a distance. I shall suffer death as willingly as I would quaff a bowl of wine, and God will be very indul-

gent to me if He is satisfied with so slight an expiation."

"You do not, then, know how you are to die? You are condemned to die at the stake!"

"God be praised for that! Fire is the only kind of pain that I am not familiar with. Besides, that will accustom me to the flames of purgatory."

"Such a death will free you entirely from them, if you meet it in a holy manner."

They spent the rest of the day in pious conversation. The penitent never grew tired listening to the exhortations of his confessor. But, like a good shepherd who leaves his faithful flock in the fold and goes in search of the lost sheep, the religious, in a manner forgetting Bouillac, whose conversion seemed certain, returned ever and again in thought to the turret, and to the poor impenitent robber within its walls. Bouillac perceived his distraction, and said: "You are, perhaps, thinking of Soudriol. When he has once taken a resolution, twenty swords prevented to his breast could not turn him from it."

"Nevertheless, I ought to try. I must not give him up until the last moment. He has now had time to become calm, and reflect."

"You do not know him. The more you show

your anxiety for his salvation, the more obstinate he will be. Pretend that you have abandoned him. I will speak to him myself. But, Father, tell me—are we to be executed before dawn?”

“An hour after sun-rise.”

“Return a little earlier, and I shall tell you how I have succeeded.”

“Yes; your advice is, I think, the best. Induce him to repent. What glory it would be for you, if you succeeded in snatching him from hell, to be able to present your friend to God for your justification, saying: ‘Lord, I have offended Thee; but if I have lost my own soul, here is one that I have gained for Thee!’”

The archers re-conducted Bouillac to the turret. As they opened the door, they heard a deep groan; and, going in cautiously, they found Soudriol lying on the floor, with his face downward, in a pool of blood. Raising him up, they restored animation by bathing his face in cold water, after which they carried him to the wall. The robber allowed himself to be dragged along, and sank upon the floor, as if too weak to remain standing.

“Did you try to kill yourself?” asked one of the armed men. “Could you not have patience for one day more?”

Soudriol answered only in stifled sobs. When he saw that they again tied the knot which he had rent asunder, and even substituted a stronger rope, he broke out anew in sighs and lamentations. His body, he said, was all bruised; his pains were excruciating; he should die before morning; it was barbarous thus to leave him in agony for two days; justice required him to die only once, but——

“Two days!” exclaimed the archer, interrupting him. “Be consoled. Your agony shall be a short one. This time to-morrow your sufferings shall have an end.”

“In this world, at all events,” added Bouillac.

“If you give way to so many lamentations in consequence of a few scratches, what will be your feelings when the flames peel off and devour every inch of flesh on your body?”

“If you had a spark of compassion for me,” said Soudriol, “you would dispatch me with one blow.”

“If you had shown mercy to the many unhappy ones whom you assassinated, you would not now need to implore us to grant you what is not in our power.”

“If you are not better than I am, why do you punish me?”

"You have too much courage, my friend. We should not like to deprive our comrades of the money given them for preparing the stake, and the people of the pleasure of seeing you treated as you deserve."

The archers then retired, and the two robbers remained alone in prison.

Day began to wear in the turret. Darkness was spreading its deep and dreamful shades under the vaults. Soudriol was seated on the floor, and Bouillac stood in silence looking at him.

"Have you suffered much?" he asked. The other answered by a hissing sneer. "But where did so much blood come from?" continued Bouillac.

"Can you not imagine? When I had almost gnawed the rope asunder, I became impatient, and pulled it from the wall with so much violence that I fell back to the ground."

"Your cries and groans, then, were only——"

"I scratched myself," interrupted the other; "but as I found that my first plan proved impracticable, I had projected another—which must have been successful, if I had moved the archers so far to compassion as to remove me from this place."

“ You must not think of it ; our doom is sealed.”

“ Then your conversion did not procure a pardon for you, either ?”

“ I trust that it did—before God.”

“ Why, then, are you still in irons ?”

“ It is precisely by the ordeal of suffering that I am to obtain pardon and mercy.”

“ Then you shall be burned with me ?”

“ Such is my expectation.”

“ You are, indeed, well repaid for your cowardice and base hypocrisy, in not gaining anything by it.”

“ I am not a hypocrite. I acted with all frankness, and I should never have confessed had I not been sincerely repentant.”

“ You need not try to deceive me ; you have no cause to be afraid, as I shall not betray you ; and, besides, what does it matter ?”

“ I swear to you that I am happy to efface my crimes by expiating them in the flames.”

“ Then I have been strangely mistaken in you. I considered you my equal ; I thought you were stout-hearted and defiant.”

“ Call my conduct what you please. Even before I was captured I had some serious reflections. As I lay among the mountains, with my eyes raised towards heaven, and listened to the wind howling

above, and heard the foaming waves of the torrent's thundering at my feet beneath, I thought that it was not man who had divided the plain into rivers, valleys and precipices; I thought it was not man who had laid the foundations of the hills, and spanned the firmament like a tent under which I was sleeping. My conclusion was, that if man could not execute such gigantic works, there must be a God."

"How very learned you have become! Have you learned to read, also?"

"We do not require learning to read the book of creation. I am sure that you also have observed the rivers and mountains."

"But as nobody has seen the beginning of the world, neither you nor anybody else can say that it ever had a beginning. If it has always been in existence, it is not necessary to have recourse to the supposition of a God in order to explain its creation."

"But if He did not maintain the order which He has established in His work, would not all the parts composing it have long ago fallen asunder? and would they, without rebellion or resistance, continue to perform their prescribed functions? If we had not been at the head of our comrades, to

enforce obedience and keep them in restraint, would they have executed our plans?"

"Supposing, then, that there is a God, you yourself will admit that every one has his particular task. What follows then? As the lambs and the chamois are made to feed the wolves and the vultures, so, also, men cannot live unless they eat each other. When we robbed and even killed travellers who offered resistance, we were not more guilty than the wolves and vultures. Man made the laws; fear dictated them; and it is only strength of numbers which supports them. As there is no merit in obeying them, neither is there any crime in violating them, when it can be done with impunity."

Bouillac did not know how to reply to this reasoning, and no wonder. If we take away the idea of God, we cannot establish a law. On what should it be based? On public opinion? We have seen the people applaud the most monstrous crimes, and raise altars to the most execrable culprits. And what man of sense would make public feeling his guide, since it is so fickle in its caprices, and sometimes so august in its prejudices and partialities. Codes of laws would have no other authority than brute force, and he who could defy that power, or

escape from it, might there indulge all his passions and whims. The most shameless robbers might complain of the iniquity of the judges who condemned them. Soudriol was right.

Both remained silent ; and Bouillac, who was not a very profound theologian, busied himself thinking of arguments to meet his companion. " It is," he said at last, " a very poor compliment to man to compare him to the most cruel of beasts ; moreover, in your comparison, man is worse than the wolves and the vultures ; for they do not devour animals of their own species, neither do they usually lay snares for them. I feel that I am superior to mere beasts, and I believe that I have a soul which they have not—a soul capable of distinguishing between good and evil, and that wolves have no idea of such a distinction. When I did evil, it was not through ignorance. I knew that the men whom I slew had as great a right to live as I had, and I have never been so proud as to think that God sent men into this world, and kept them in existence for thirty or forty years, that I might assassinate them at pleasure."

" And if they were not destined to perish on that particular day, and in that particular manner, why did your God deliver them to us ? If He gave

them to us, we did His will; and if we disobeyed Him, then He is not so attentive to earthly things as you represent Him."

"In order to know God's motives in permitting the death of these men, it would be necessary to enter into His decrees, and assist at His deliberations. He could have provided us with other victims, or He could have saved those whom we killed. At all events, accusations against His providence, and rejoicings at His negligence, would come from us with much better grace if we were free and victorious. Now that we are at the very threshold of execution, with irons round our hands, feet and waist, it seems to me that the best thing would be to implore His clemency."

"It is not certain that He exists."

"It is only too certain, on the contrary. And believing in His existence, I am resolved to keep near to Him, at all hazards."

"Pray and tremble," said Soudriol, "if that amuses you. I shall not pray; I shall defy Him if He exists, and insult Him to His face."

CHAPVER IV.

BOUILLAC said no more, but prayed silently for his comrade. Soudriol began to eat, with indifference; and when he had finished the provisions brought in the morning, he invited his companion to follow his example.

"You can have my share also," said Bouillac. "As this is the last night which we shall pass on earth, I should like to spend it fasting."

"Eat," said Soudriol; "you require strength and courage."

"I am not so great a coward as you take me to be. I dread the justice of God, but you shall not see me shrink at the stake."

"It is decided that we shall be burned?"

"It seems so."

"So much the better. Burning is rather a severe punishment; but there is something decidedly vulgar in hanging."

"Whether hanged or burned, we shall be in the presence of God a quarter of an hour after the execution commences."

“Are you going to resume your sermons. Grant me a few minutes of peace, and eat your meal. Perhaps it will not be too much to keep up strength in you.”

“Do not fear ; you shall not see me faint.”

“I hope not ; however, there is not only question of dying—but we must also be able to make an effort, if necessary, to aid those who may come to rescue us.”

“Then you have not, even now, given up every illusion ?”

“There is no illusion ; the more I think of it, the more I am convinced that our comrades will not abandon us.”

“When had you friends ?”

“I think they did not give you any cause to distrust them.”

“Ah ! You rely on their friendship ! So long as we were free, and ruled them with club and dagger, they obeyed us. And many a time, as you know, we were obliged to restrain them by threats and blows. Are you, then, quite certain that they were not tired of our command, and that it was not they who betrayed us ?”

“That is impossible ; we were too necessary to them. Perhaps they do not love us ; but interest

is a more powerful bond than friendship, and their interest requires of them that they should do all in their power to save us."

"I fear that they are rather congratulating themselves on having been delivered from our authority."

"It is the greatest misfortune which could befall them. They are not capable of conceiving a good plan of assault. If I had not foreseen and regulated everything in advance, the slightest accident would have disconcerted them. If they allow us to perish, there is nothing left for them but to seek some other land, and there earn their bread as best they can by labor."

"Perhaps they are already in prison, as we are, for I did not recognize any of them, either when we were judged, or when we were examined."

"They were right. It would be imprudent to give any alarm. It was much better to lull the authorities into confidence and security; for, if they suspected any plot, they would immediately prevent its success. Our example taught them prudence."

"It is true that we were somewhat rash."

"Who could doubt the fidelity of the inn-keeper, since he has proved it to us during so many years?"

His long complicity, and the part he took in our deeds, were a guarantee to us, and answered sufficiently for him to us; but it seems that magistrates allow certain crimes to cancel others. Perhaps, also, after having enjoyed fifteen years of peace in our mountains, he may have taken a fancy to justice, and laid a snare for us which might have been so easily avoided.

"Let that pass," said Bouillac, "our hour is fixed, and vain regrets are useless. Let us rather profit by the time left us, and appease God, whom our crimes had worn out, in order that when our punishment is over here, it may not begin again in the next world to last for all eternity."

Soudriol heeded not even this appeal.

The two prisoners passed the night without sleeping; but the thoughts of each were very different. Those are to be pitied who have not had the benefit of religious instruction in their youth! Their heart is always empty; and when the hour of adversity comes, they are without support and consolation.

Bouillac was less unhappy than his companion. The holy lessons which the good monks had instilled into his mind had been stifled by the growling of his passions; but, when the presence of

death had drawn him from his riotous way of living, and placed him, as it were, face to face with himself, and when calm had been restored in his soul, christian ideas triumphed, and he found no difficulty in returning to God, whose image had been only veiled, not effaced, in his soul by the turbulent waves of sin. Carried from his mother when but a child, Bondruol had grown up among robbers. When he heard heaven mentioned, it was with contempt. To him, religion seemed a weakness, fear of God, cowardice. As he had never given time for reflection, it was only natural that his mind should run only on things purely material, and altogether lose sight of a supernatural world, where were to be redressed all the crimes and injustice of the world in which he moved. Not expecting to live again after death, he became very much attached to this life, and his exit from the scenes of men oppressed him with a cold horror never experienced by those who expect immortality. Hence it was that whilst his companion thought of his crimes in the spirit of compunction, asked pardon for them, and consoled himself with the consideration of the divine mercy, Bondruol was agitated by inquietude and anguish. He got up, and down, lay on the floor; but no matter what

posture he took, there was no repose for him. Would his friends try to save him? And if they did make an effort, would they succeed? Did not the magistrate think too much of the capture he had made not to take all possible precautions? He had some outrageous fits of foolish anger against the magistrate, for not setting him perfectly free from prison and death. At other times he stormed against the inn-keeper for having betrayed them, against his companions for not delivering him, against himself for having fallen so clumsily into the snare laid for him. In these transports of fury he dashed his head against the wall, as if he would break his skull.

In the meantime, Bouillac murmured holy invocations, interrupted by sighs of sorrow. Soudriol did not disturb him, but rather listened to him with feelings of envy and surprise. But faith is a gift of heaven, given only to those who have merited it, or at least implored it.

A little before dawn, there was a noise outside, at the basement of the turret. Soudriol started, jumped up, and listened with excited attention. The reflection of burning torches passed through the lattices into the cell; confused shouts reached his ear, and whilst he stood motionless and not

daring to breathe, he imagined he could distinguish the voices of some of his companions. At the end of a minute, however, the heavy gate of the monastery opened, turned heavily on its hinges, closed again with a grating sound, and everything was still as before.

The first rays of the sun aroused Bouillac from his meditation.

"This," said he, "is our last day ; does it not seem to you that the night passed very rapidly away ?"

"The last," said Soudriol, "*perhaps*. Did you not hear anything ?"

"Yes ; it is probable that some of our comrades have been taken. When the shepherds are struck down, what becomes of the flock ?"

"I will not believe you. Even supposing it to be so, there are still enough left to rescue us."

"Soudriol, my friend, do not deceive yourself. Repent ; we have only an hour ; ask pardon of God. Since you must suffer, what does it cost you to suffer in the spirit of expiation ?"

"And what interest have you in inducing me to do an act of meanness, in order to excuse yourself ?"

"I am your friend ; I desire not to be separated

from you in eternity ; I desire not to see you burning in hell whilst I shall be in the refreshing happiness of heaven, after having passed through the flames of the stake."

"Fool ! You believe all the lies of the priests. After all you have done, do you imagine that the muttering of a few words has made you innocent?"

"My words have not so much virtue. Neither my words, nor my tears, nor even the torture of death by fire could wash away my crimes, if I had nothing more than the merit of a late and barren conversion ; but raise your eyes to those pictures," said he, pointing to the wall, where the growing light began to make the figures visible ; "what they represent is not a fable ; that happened, and there are books enough to bear testimony to it. In the centre you see the Son of God, who died upon a gibbet to expiate the sins of all men—yours and mine also ; He gave man the power of remitting sin. Pray to Him, and He will pour out His merits upon you. No matter how sinful you may be, God the Father will not strike you down if Jesus stands before you and pleads for mercy."

"You are mad !"

"The two condemned beside Him are, like us, bad men and robbers ; but one obtains pardon of

his crimes—because, when dying, he repented, and recognized God expiring on the cross, like himself.”

“Because he was a coward, like you.”

“He was not a coward. Does the coward console the afflicted? Does the coward speak kind and friendly words to those on the point of execution? No! The coward will insult you as you pass; the coward outraged the Crucified; the coward died blaspheming God; the other thief is the coward.”

“Bouillac, my friend, check your imagination; do not deafen me with such nonsense. I shall not, I tell you again, bend the knee before either God or man.”

“And before a woman—before your mother? Would you be ashamed to beseech your mother?”

“My mother cursed me when I left her.”

“No matter; despite her maledictions, she would again open her arms and heart, and you would not be ashamed to ask pardon of her, if she lived, and came to you at the stake. God has given us a Mother, that we may invoke her when we are afraid to turn to Him.”

Soudriol intimated entire dissent by a gesture, and began to whistle the air of a song.

The Superior of the monastery entered a short

time after. Neither his zeal, nor his charity, nor the unction of his eloquence, succeeded in touching Soudriol, who did not speak to him at all, except to make some inquiry about the noise of the preceding night.

“Two unfortunate creatures,” said the religious, “having entered the tavern in which you were arrested, slew the owner; but, being captured, were brought here last night.”

This information made Soudriol as audacious as ever. He was convinced that his companions would save him, and refused to listen to the priest. The officers of justice arrived soon after, and having removed the chain from the feet of the prisoners, led them away. They were dragged through the principal streets of the town, scantily dressed, their feet bare, and a rope around their necks. With touching humility, Bouillac begged pardon of the people, and Soudriol looked eagerly about him, to catch the glance of some of his companions.

Arrived at the place of death, Bouillac knelt down, and asked the last absolution from the religious, but Soudriol defied God to the last.

“My brother, my brother,” said the Franciscan “have pity on your soul, which, in a quarter of an hour more, shall be in the presence of God.”

"I laugh at your God," answered Soudriol, with other words so blasphemous that we dare not repeat them.

The spectators were seized with horror and indignation, and if the archers had not kept them at a distance, they would have torn the wretch to pieces. Soudriol was tied without resistance, and the executioners applied fire to the pile in four different places. He uttered frightful cries and horrible blasphemies when the flames began to scorch him. Near him stood the priest, with uplifted hand, conjuring him to confess his crimes, that even then he might give him absolution. He was answered by curses, and his arm fell without making the sign of salvation.

Volumes of flame and smoke now arose from the pile, and completely concealed the sufferers. Soudriol's voice was drowned ; but near him was heard a voice singing the praises of the Mother of God, in the words of the beautiful hymn which begins thus :

" At the Cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last."

The voice continued to sing every strophe, even to the last, without losing its strength. When it came to the words :

“Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
Lest in flames I burn and die,”

the pile gave way, and the burning logs were scattered around, whereupon the voice continued :

“In his awful judgment day,”

and finished the hymn. The fire abated by degrees, and soon the spectators beheld Bouillac standing above the burned wood, saved by our dear Mother, whilst his companion lay at his feet a heap of ashes. He retired to a monastery, and there spent the rest of his days. Pope John XXII., who then resided at Avignon, had a church built on the place of execution, and, in memory of the event, called it the Church of Our Lady of Miracles.

THE CROSS OF OVIEDO.

“I CANNOT bear those timid apologists who say : ‘The gospel is good because such a prince practiced it.’ I wish they would say inversely : ‘Such a prince is good, because he practices the gospel faithfully.’”

I have already written this thought elsewhere, but my words are not so impressive that I should be careful not to repeat them when appropriate.

History bears witness to this truth on every page. Their fidelity in observing the doctrines taught by Christ will always be the measure of the virtues of kings, and of the happiness their subjects derive from their reign. But the pagan annals set before us emperors who have been the delight of mankind. Philosophy boasts of having formed rulers of the people more perfect than christianity has done. The wisdom of Trajan did not hinder the provinces from feeling the weight of his avarice, and the flattering rhetoric of Pliny, his courtier, has neither

hidden the scandals of his palace, nor the cruelties he inflicted on christians. In the legend of Julian the Apostate, I have shown what we ought to think of that emperor. The only exception that can be objected against my rule is the Emperor Titus ; but there is nothing to prove that the destroyer of Jerusalem—the executor of divine vengeance and of the prophetic threats of Our Saviour, might not have had a knowledge of the gospel, and, if it were possible, I would answer that he practiced it without knowing it.

The best kings are those who have merited the title of saints, and if posterity entertains any reproach against their memory, it can bring against them only such charges as result from the inherent imperfections of their age, and of human nature, of which the church herself accused them during their life. Some had not shrunk from hiding under the royal purple a penitential hair shirt—from wearing, under their golden diadems, a crown of thorns, and from cultivating the austere virtues of the cenobite in the midst of their sceptred power, and of the intoxications of victory and prosperity.

Alphonso the Chaste was one of this number. King of Asturias by birth, he endeavored to render himself worthy of the throne by an active and ar-

dent piety. Piety did not make him effeminate. His father, Froila, left him a kingdom harrassed on all sides by the Saracens, and straitened as his kingdom was, Maurogatus, the young prince's uncle, despoiled him of it during his minority. Alphonso did not lose courage ; he placed his rights under the protection of the Mother of God, and urged heaven, by the innocence of his life, and, above all, by the purity of his manners, to take his part in the contest. In a transport of fervor he pronounced, at the feet of the Blessed Virgin, a vow of perpetual virginity. The report of his virtues charmed the heart of the people. They followed him in throngs. He had, as yet, no kingdom, and still he had numerous subjects and a powerful and devoted army. The usurper could make no head against him. He entered into the possession of his inheritance, and began to think of enlarging it at the expense of the Moors—the enemies of Jesus Christ and His church. Patriotism, elevated by the religious zeal and love with which the young monarch inspired the hearts of all, assembled under his banners all the youth of Asturias, and filled his soldiers with an irresistible bravery. All the battles he engaged in were so many victories. These first triumphs increased his power, and he was able

to sustain the shock of all the Arab forces that the Emir Mugaild precipitated upon him to crush him. The battle between them took place in the year 793. The Spaniards were full of daring. When the king gave the signal, the two armies saw distinctly, in the midst of the christian standards, the Blessed Virgin, bearing in one hand a buckler and in the other a flaming spear, with which she threatened the Saracens.

This vision emboldened the Spaniards, and spread horror, confusion and consternation among the infidel ranks. Seventy thousand Saracens, with the Emir that commanded them, lay dead upon the field of battle on this glorious day. The camp of the infidels and all their riches fell into the power of the victors. To testify his gratitude to the Mother of God, to whom he attributed his victory, as well as to perpetuate the remembrance of it, Alphonso built, in honor of the Blessed Virgin, a church at Oviedo, his capital. Whilst it was in course of erection, the nobles begged with so much persistency that the king would take a wife, that he could not refuse them. Ambassadors crossed the Pyrenees, and appeared at Aix-la-Chapelle to solicit the hand of the Princess Bertha, sister of Charlemagne.

Such was the glory that the name of Alphonso had acquired in Christendom, that the king of the Franks did not hesitate a moment, if we believe Baronius, as he wished that the marriage should cement his alliance with the king of Asturias. The ambassadors brought letters to Bertha, by which she was informed of Alphonso's vow, and the condition upon which he had consented to marry. The princess made no objection. Espoused to the king he treated her as a sister, and they lived together, by mutual agreement, in continence and virginity.

The building of the church was completed. Pillars of marble, taken from Mahommedan mosques, supported the christian edifice. The young warriors gloried in making expeditions into the Moorish country, to bring back spoils with which to ornament the sanctuary. Many who had enriched it by their bravery did not live to see its dedication, and went to receive from God the reward of their pious exploits, before the completion of the church. But it was finished at last, and the day for the consecration of the altars was fixed.

Alphonso had reserved a large quantity of pure gold, with rare and precious jewels, obtained by conquest from the Saracens. Of these he intended

to make a cross, the magnificence of which should be unrivalled throughout Christendom.

But there was not in all Asturias a goldsmith capable of undertaking this work.

Some days after, at sunrise, and before the hour when the gates of the city were opened, three strangers were observed in the streets of Oviedo. No one had seen them enter, nor could any one tell whence they came. The eyes of the citizens followed them with curiosity, for neither among the young people who had followed the embassy to the northern regions of the Franks, nor among those who had traversed the Moorish frontier, did any one recognize the fashion of their apparel. They seemed to be about the same age. Scarce past the time of boyhood, there was discernible in their faces, however, something of the energy of manhood and of the maturity and gravity of old age. Their looks were full of power and wisdom, and a glory more than human seemed to surround their heads. A sweet and holy recollection was seated on their brows. It seemed the earth they trod upon was a land of exile, and that their thoughts turned to their distant native country.

After having sought their way for some time, they stopped in a public square, and one of them,

approaching a Spaniard who was standing at his threshold, asked him :

“ Would it be a breach of courtesy, sir, to beg of you to point out to us the street that leads to the king’s palace ? ”

Surprised to hear him speak, with such purity, the dialect of the country, the merchant to whom he spoke surveyed him with an air of astonishment for a moment, and then replied :

“ I will not point it out to you ; I will accompany you myself.”

It was not merely from a disinterested sentiment of hospitality that he offered to act as their guide ; he hoped, while walking with them, to be rewarded for his politeness by satisfying his curiosity in their regard. After calling his wife, and giving the house in charge to her, he set out along with them.

“ You, gentlemen,” he asked of them, “ are, no doubt, ambassadors, coming to offer to our glorious monarch the alliance of some distant king ? ”

“ This country, certainly, is not our own, but we are not commissioned with such weighty matters. Besides, the king of Asturias has been in alliance since infancy with the Lord whom we obey.”

“ Might it be the king of the Franks ? His sister is our queen.”

“ The king of the Franks is mighty, but He who has sent us is still more powerful.”

“ Then you bring presents with you ?”

“ Yes ; we come to offer, as a present, the talent we have acquired for working the precious metals. We have learned, by rumor, that the king seeks goldsmiths to make a golden cross. We have come to beg the honor of attempting this work.”

“ May God assist you ! The king is munificent ; your reward will be great.”

“ It is not in the hope of gain that we have been drawn hither. Our reward is to work for the glory of the house of God.”

At these words they arrived at the gates of the palace. They saluted their guide, thanking him for his courtesy, and entered.

Alphonso received them with much affability. He questioned them ; they would not say from what country they came ; they merely gave the vague answer that they were neither natives of the Spanish soil, nor of the same side of the mountains. In proof of their talent as artists, they showed the king several articles of curiously fashioned jewelry,

of which the workmanship was their own ; they offered these as a pledge until they should return the gold and precious stones which were to be confided to them, but the king did not require any such pledge. The air of open frankness which shone from their countenances, and the modesty of their language, immediately obtained for them the confidence of the holy monarch.

“And how long a time will this labor require?” he asked of them.

“The most skillful workmen, your majesty, working night and day, could not do it in one week, even if the metal should come without flaw from the mould.”

“And what wages shall I give you?”

“We know your majesty’s munificence. When the cross is finished, you will be able to calculate its value. All we ask is that you would assign us a workshop where we can labor without disturbance.”

Alphonso gave them an apartment in the palace itself, which the goldsmiths declared to be perfectly suitable. They prepared furnaces, and all the instruments necessary to their trade. Then they carefully closed all their doors, as if to pursue their work in secret.

Now the room they had chosen had a private en-

trance, of which the king had not thought. When at table with the nobles of his court, he told them of the arrival of the goldsmiths.

"They are shut up in their room," said he; "but has any one given them provisions?"

He sent one of his officers to ask what they would have to eat and drink.

The officer came back immediately. He had knocked and received no answer. In listening at the door, he had neither heard the noise of hammers, nor the crackling of flames, nor the scratching of chisels. The room was certainly empty.

The king then thought of the secret door, and turned pale. The goldsmiths, no doubt, had fled, and carried off his treasures.

"Please your majesty," cried the lords, "they cannot be far off yet. We will pursue them, and make them pay the penalty of their crime."

"No," said the prince; "I had too much confidence in them, and I should alone suffer. But perhaps we accuse them unjustly; we are not quite sure of their guilt."

He went in person to the apartment he had assigned them. The same silence still reigned there. They broke in the door, but found not the strangers; but in their place they found a golden cross

magnificently chiseled, and adorned with precious stones. It was weighed, and found to be exactly the weight of gold the king had placed in their hands.

The king and all his court, amazed at the inimitable perfection of the work, recognized in it the handiwork of angels, and falling on their knees they gave thanks to God.



OUR LADY OF ARABIDA.

THE sky was cloudless; the golden orb of day quietly descended the western declivity of the heavens, its dazzling disc reflecting upon the surface of the sea, as pure and as blue as the firmament, itself.

The "Brahmin," a heavy Portuguese merchantman, heavily laden with precious merchandise, glided slowly over the waters, leaving behind it waves of snowy foam. The winds slept in the sails, that hung listless from the masts; even the cordage hung lifeless, without the slightest motion. The sailors, stretched lazily upon the deck, or leaning against the railing, sang or dreamed of the joys of home, for their voyage had been long. It was eighteen months since they had left the port of Lisbon, and now they looked forward to the joy of re-entering it on the morrow.

Two men, standing upon the quarter-deck, conversed in low tones. One was small and dark-complexioned, as were the greater part of the crew.

His hair, formerly of deepest black, was prematurely blanched, and contrasted with his bronzed yet young-looking face, and his keen piercing eye; his dry, smooth forehead, had just assumed a sudden expression of anxiety which had not been remarked by his companion. His voice was quick, imperious and abrupt. This was Lupaz, the captain of the merchantman. The tall stature of the other, his fair complexion and auburn hair, cold and composed manner, grave, slow and methodic speech, distinguished him from the rest of the passengers. His foreign accent, while conversing with the Portuguese, and his views and opinions, so original in their expression, yet withal so just, all betrayed a true son of Albion in her Catholic days. He was an English merchant, named Jonathas, engaged in the India trade.

“Have I not made a good speculation?” he said, in a tone of phlegmatic satisfaction. “Thanks to your good ‘Brahmin,’ I shall soon exchange my ivory for its weight in gold in your goodly city of Lisbon.”

“It is certain,” replied the captain, looking, as he spoke, toward the south, “that my old sea-bark has borne herself valiantly along the route we have travelled. At present, God be praised, we have

passed the greatest dangers, but we must not sleep at the helm. For my part, I am in the habit of never indulging in hope until I see the old 'Brahmin' safe in port, with two anchors keeping her steady at her moorings."

"I sail without fear; and, if necessary, would retrace our passage to the Indies and back, and wager a safe and happy landing."

"Down from aloft there, and make ready to take in sail," interrupted the captain, addressing some sailors in the rigging.

"To-morrow," continued the Englishman, "to-morrow, without doubt, we will be in Lisbon."

"Well, I wish it with all my heart. I promised Juarita that this would be the last time I ever cast anchor on the coast of the Indies. Juarita is my daughter, and when she marries she must employ me to keep her children amused with my tales of the sea. For forty years I have been before the mast and in command. I have seen death as near me as any other, but I must confess it would seem hard to be made food for the fishes."

"No, no; I guarantee we shall not be food for aught that swims in the sea."

"You have on board your fortune, and thirty years of existence, at least. I have loaded the

'Brahmin' with the happiness and future of two lives which are a hundredfold dearer to me than my own."

"Well, look at the heavens; if you had the winds, the sun and the calm in the hold, you could not compose finer weather."

"I do not deny it. Yet, to speak in good Portuguese, I do not like this quiet and hypocritical appearance of sea. I would like to see a strong wind which would make the 'Brahmin' cleave the waters. We ought to jump the bar of Olheppo before night, for the night often brings up a squall of wind."

"Bah! a squall would not prevent us from passing; and even if we should have a little tempest, we would debark with the greater joy."

"It is true, my wife and daughter pray daily in the church for me, and they burn as many candles before the altar of the Madonna as there are Sundays since I left the port of Lisbon. Surely their prayers must be heard in paradise, whose saints they so much resemble."

"You would lay your hard earnings before them, I say, and lay aside the marriage dowry, even if you had no one to pray for you. The 'Brah-

min' carries ballast that will prevent her going down."

"I am an old sailor, but I do not believe in talismans. I know no long prayers, but often raise my eyes to God; and it seems to me that he heard me, since the waves have no long balanced my hammock, and I am still on my beam."

"Yes, captain, but you must confess that the 'Brahmin' is not as solid as you are, and that it is not in a good state to resist a bad sea; but I told you at Surrata that we would have a happy passage, and I still believe it. Would you know why? Let us go below, and you will see in my cabin an image of our Blessed Lady, nailed near my hammock. Do you believe that she has served us as pilot and steersman, and that she has brought us this far, as though she stood at the wheel, only to leave us the last day?"

"She would certainly do us no harm if we did not insult her, but I confess I have more confidence in my crew. I have chosen it myself from among the oldest sailors. I know that the Virgin commands the waves, as I command my cabin boys, and I would be careful not to despise her; but if we had nothing else to guide the ship except her —"

At this moment the captain's brow darkened, and, interrupting himself, he cried, "Where is the promontory?"

"Southwest-by-west," replied the sailor from the rigging.

"Do you see that line below the sun?" continued Lupaz, raising his finger to indicate the sign to the Englishman. "Before an hour the wind will sing us a song that we will scarcely like to hear."

Jonathas' reply was prevented by the captain's hurried orders to the crew.

The sun grew pale; nevertheless there was not the slightest cloud to be seen in the heavens. The sails felt not the slightest breath of wind; from the western horizon came a dull rattling, and again as it were the sound of trumpets. The surface of the sea, before calm and unruffled, was covered with flakes of foam. One might imagine that all the sea-monsters had left their deep caves to swim under the waters round the vessel. Then, fine and transparent vapors rose from the waves, and, rapidly ascending, obscured the horizon, which it surrounded as a cincture. Soon the azure of the heavens was veiled, and clouds formed around the sun, like a heavy wall with crimson coping.

Jonathas evinced not the slightest anxiety. Calm and tranquil, he contemplated with silent admiration the varied and singular forms which the clouds assumed; some resembled enormous rocks, which invisible titans piled together in order to scale the heavens; others imitated immense tents of soldiers, covered with richest and most gorgeous hangings, or palaces whose vaulted roofs rested on gigantic foundations and columns of white marble.

The remembrance of the wild traditions of Ossian peopled, to the eyes of the Englishman, all this country of vapor. Sometimes he saw warriors advancing with rapid strides, with buckler, shield and lance; sometimes it was entire armies meeting in fierce combat; above them, in monstrous chariots drawn by owls and bats, were elfs, fairies, and all the creatures of northern mythology. Captivated by these imaginations, Jonathas remained motionless, and had not observed the agitation which had suddenly succeeded the calm.

The clouds covered the entire heavens, and the sun could only be seen through two clouds, whose rapid approach threatened to entirely obscure its rays. The distant sounds of the sea were overwhelmed by the heavy dashing of the surrounding

waves, the storm whistled through the cordage, and the sails were stretched to their utmost tension. The wind, with its keen whistle, swept in fury over the ocean, dashing the little white waves wildly on every side ; the pilot lost all control over the vessel, and the needle of the compass, seized with vertigo, pointed to all parts of the compass. The lead was cast, but no sounding could be effected. The sailor on the look-out could see no trace of land.

"What are you waiting for, Jonathas?" exclaimed the captain. "Now or never is the time to invoke your Virgin ; if she brings us safe through, we will at least owe her a fine wax candle."

"Oh," replied the Englishman, phlegmatically, "the tempest will be splendid!"

"But the 'Brahmin' will never be able to weather it."

Lapaz was seen in every part of the vessel, animating his crew by word and action, issuing his orders briefly and clearly, foreseeing all things in advance ; he was one of those determined characters who would defend his life to the last extremity.

"The luckiest thing that could happen to us," he muttered, "would be to be cast on shore."

But he was unable to calculate at what distance he was from the land, nor in what direction the vessel should turn to reach it.

Heavy clouds covered the sky, and were reflected in waves as black as themselves. The sun had entirely disappeared, and the night joined its shades to the darkness of the tempest. Huge waves dashed over the vessel, which groaned and cracked as if the next wave would in all probability dash its broken fragments over the angry waters. The peals of thunder reverberated through the heavens, and the flashes of lightning more clearly showed all the horrors of night. A heavy rain mingled its tepid waters with the boiling foam of the sea.

A wave carried away the rudder. The sailors fashioned another with the thick boards kept in reserve, but it was broken in a few minutes. The deck was a flood of water, as wave after wave poured over it; the sailors ran to the pumps, but discouragement relaxed their efforts, and the voice of the captain, almost lost in the din of the tempest, was no longer obeyed.

"Oh, Jonathan," said he, in a tone of reproof, to the Englishman, "why do you not aid us with your labor?"

"Yes," said the merchant, "it is time that I

should not. He ran down to his cabin, but almost immediately returned, pale and trembling. "We are lost," he said, "I see no hope left."

"What has happened?" exclaimed the captain, struck with the alteration in his voice.

"The image of *Notre Dame* has been torn by some impious hand from my cabin, and we may all perish in this storm for our impiety."

"Can't you forget that picture, and lend a hand at the pumps?"

"Land ho! land ho!" shouted a sailor from the masthead, who at that moment caught a glimpse of the coast by the flash of lightning which lit up the heavens.

Scarcely had he uttered the cry, when a violent blast snapped the mainmast close to the deck, and cordage and masts in a confused mass hung over the side of the vessel, at the imminent risk of engulfing it in the boiling waters. Quick as thought the captain cut the cordage, and repeated, in a loud voice, "Land ho! land ho!" But on what coast were they on the point of landing? Was it a sandy shore, and of easy access? or a coast bristling with rocks? The captain made these rapid reflections; but what could he do at present, upon a dismantled vessel?

The sudden grating of the keel revealed the presence of rocks beneath ; the winds and the waves seemed to make a plaything of the vessel, and the captain thought with terror that every instant it might run upon a shoal ; and in spite of his courage and energy, his blood curdled.

A fierce driving rain dissipated the heavy fog which obscured the air, and the shore was disclosed to the gaze of the terrified sailors. It was formed of gigantic masses of rocks of terrible height. This granite wall was defended by a chain of reefs, against which the waves of the sea broke with a frightful roaring. Shipwreck, then, seemed inevitable. Lapaz knew the whole Portuguese coast, and he had learned to dread this terrific shore ; he was on the point of yielding to despair. One chance of safety alone remained — the waves might perchance cast the vessel across the reefs without breaking it to pieces ; it might rest in safety against the rocks until the storm abated. With regard to sacrificing his cargo, the captain would not consent at any price.

His hope seemed realized, for the violence of the waves suddenly raised the vessel, and carried it to the top of a rock, and there it hung, suspended as it were, trembling until every beam

cracked as though it would every moment fall to pieces.

The crew understood their great peril, all were not devout, but danger inspired all with the same sentiment, with a common impulse they knelt with clasped hands raised to heaven, and Jonathan, in the name of all, implored the assistance of the Virgin Mary. The winds moaned around the deck, and the waves beat against her prow, without being able to move her from her critical position. The brow of the captain brightened, if the tempest subsided, the vessel was saved. Unfortunately, an immense wave flooded the deck, raising the vessel upon its waters, and, aided by a strong blast of wind, carried it upon the opposite side, where it glided into a channel between the reef and the rocky shore where, as it balanced and quivered from the descent, the hold was filled with water in less than a quarter of an hour. No one now had courage to work the pumps, and the sailors thought of nothing but gaining their safety on hastily constructed rafts.

But Lupa could not be resigned to abandon the vessel which contained her daughter's dowry. He looked at the water, undecided whether he should throw himself into it or wait until it reached the

deck. Jonathan, kneeling, with clasped hands and bare head, prayed devoutly, and only thought of preparing his soul to appear before its God. The night still continued black, and the tempest redoubled its fury, the waves dashed over the rocks, and poured their waters down upon the deck of the vessel, which still continued motionless in the channel.

"The Virgin must have no power, or else she is greatly enraged," said the captain. "Oh, woe is me, to perish thus miserably upon the Portuguese coast, and almost within sight of port, where my wife and child await me."

Instantly the horizon was radiant with a wonderful brilliancy; a watch-fire, larger and more dazzling than the sun at noonday, sprang up on the summit of the rocks, and in the gloomy darkness of the night appeared a day so bright that the eyes of the sailors were dazzled. The hands of all were raised to heaven; every heart gave utterance to prayers of joy and gratitude. They believed they saw the finger of God in this phenomenon, and they no longer doubted their safety, for by this wondrous light they perceived that the channel in which they lay led into a deep and well-sheltered little bay, whence the waters flowed by a small

stream into the ocean. The fiercely surging waves had carried them across the bar, which they could not otherwise have crossed. Courage filled every heart; all ran to the pumps, which were so efficiently worked that the hold was soon emptied of all water, and by the agitation of the sea itself in the channel, the 'Brahmin' floated down into the bay. And then that wonderful light disappeared.

Day broke, and the sailors, anxious to ascertain the cause of this phenomenon, after much difficulty succeeded in climbing up the steep rocks. Jonathas fell with his face to the earth; he recognized upon the spot they sought the same picture of Our Lady, in whom he had placed all his confidence.

He sold his merchandise, and built a chapel upon the spot, and a little hermitage close by, in which he ended his days. Juarita sent, as a wedding gift, a silver lamp to the chapel.

Such is the authentic origin of the pilgrimage of Our Lady of Arabida, one of the most celebrated in Portugal.

AVE MARIA, REFUGIUM PECCATORUM, ORA PRO ME."

A TALL OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

BY REV. J. M. J. GRAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

Many hundred years ago, when the Church of God was loved and obeyed by the whole civilized world, and nations were, therefore happy, there stood, 'mid the Vosges Mountains, in France, a lofty castle. It was old even then, and the beautiful ivy crept in verdant masses over its crested, gothic terraces. The moat was of great breadth and depth, the drawbridge strong, and the portcullis of massive iron, spiked at the ends.

Over the gate was a scroll, and these were the words : " Ave Maria, Refugium Peccatorum, ora pro me." There they were, shining in their gilt dress through sunshine and storm, by day and by night, speaking no word of defiance to the traveller, who might need the shelter of the mighty halls for

a night, but rather inviting him to certain repose. But the mighty halls have long since disappeared; the scroll no longer suggests a prayer to our refuge; nothing but a few scattered ruins tells where the stronghold of the De Lornes once stood.

Edmund de Lorne, the then lord of the castle, was one of those grand old characters which were so common in the middle ages. Brave as the well-tempered sword which he carried at his side, and as pure and noble, too, he was, above all, a christian,—a sincere, practical follower of his Divine Lord. He was never absent from his home except when his duties to his king called him forth, with his sturdy retainers, to do battle against the Moors or other enemies of his country. He was a father to his humble dependents, and loved to spend his time amongst them, aiding them by his advice and pious counsels, and settling their disputes. They, in turn, loved and trusted him, and none but would have died for the good Lord Edmund.

His spouse, who emulated his virtues, loved her pious husband dearly, and spent her time ministering to his comfort and their two children, with which God had blessed their union. As for the vassals, her presence was a never-failing source of joy to them, and hats were doffed, and heads bowed,

and prayers breathed when she passed. She would sit for hours in the midst of the humble wives of her lord's followers, and listen with interest to their joys and sorrows, and all those little lights and shadows that make up domestic history. A wise counsellor and affectionate mistress was the dear Lady Hilda.

The children, a boy and girl, the former four and the latter six years old, were the delight of their parents' hearts. So graceful, so airy and *spirituelle* was the little lady—so rosy, so chubby, such a sturdy young varlet was the future heir of De Lorne, that they carried all hearts before them. They were named after their parents, Hilda and Edmund.

It was grand to see Master Edmund astride old Snappo, the mastiff, flourishing, the while, with great display of amazing determination, a wooden sword, and calling on troops of invincible retainers to the onset. And then to observe the sidelong glance the bold warrior would cast at his father and mother to detect a smile; why no one could help loving the cunning rogue.

"I do not like such warlike symptoms in one so young," the lady would say to her husband

"Hut, tut, good dame; there'll be Moors enough,

I ween, to exercise the madcap before he dies—'Tis the old spirit, besides—a real De Lorne," the father would reply.

From morning till night the children flitted about every nook and corner of the castle. The sombre old walls echoed to their joyous laughter, and many a knight would pull up his steed and listen awhile as the silvery voices fell on his ear.

But there was one spot which, of all others, they loved best. It was a sunny seat on the bridge that covered the moat. Here they would sit for hours, and, wonderful to relate, they would observe a strict silence, or if they spoke, it was in whispers. What would they be doing? Let us approach and listen. They have just sat down, and Hilda whispers to her brother :

"I will say it on my fingers ten times over."

"So will I," answers Edmund.

And soon their innocent faces glow like angels, and then Edmund speaks a little louder. Listen.

"Ave Maria, Refugium Peccatorum, ora pro me."

They are praying to their dear Mother in heaven, and they merely repeat the words of the golden, glittering scroll above their heads.

They love that prayer, and remember the tradi

tion, oftentimes repeated to them by their father, how, one stormy night, when the wind was howling dismally, and the pelting rain was beating at the brave old tower, the gate-keeper heard a faint voice beyond the moat praying, with trembling accents, *Ave Maria, Refugium Peccatorum, ora pro me* ; how a poor, sick wayfarer was found, lying on his face, mingling his tears with the eddying pools that covered the ground ; how he was tenderly lifted up and carried to a warm bed, and tended, in all loving charity, by the inmates ; how, in the morning, the stranger had disappeared, but not before leaving a piece of parchment with the words : “ A blessing shall not depart from this house, nor shall any of its members end their lives in misfortune, whilst the stranger that passes its gates can see the petition above them, *Ave Maria, Refugium Peccatorum, ora pro me*. All this the children had by heart, and loved the prayer, but much more the beautiful Refuge addressed.

CHAPTER II.

"*Benedicite*," said a cowed stranger to the warder, one gloomy evening in autumn.

"*Dominus*," answered the latter, undoing the wicket gate and bowing to the monk.

"Is the lord of Lorne within?" asked the strange monk, with a slightly foreign accent.

"Aye, that he is, reverend father. He is e'en now reciting the beads with my lady and the children."

"Humph!"

This startled the warder; it sounded like contempt. He glanced at the stranger suspiciously, and observed a pair of very dark eyes peering at him from the cowl.

"It is strange," thought the retainer; "but Our Lady preserve me from rash judgment."

"I would have speech with your master," said the monk, at length.

"Nay, but reverend sir, he liketh not to be disturbed during the hour of orison, replied the warder, with a slight tone of expostulation in his voice.

"It is on matters of the Church, sirrah, that brooketh not delay, exclaimed the monk, with asperity.

Without speaking, the warder led the way into the castle, muttering to himself as he went : " 'Tis not a monkly fashion of eye that twinkles under his cowl. I pray God I be not belieing a man of the cloister, but I never felt thus toward one before."

Fortunately, the knight of Lorne had finished the evening prayer when the stranger was ushered in. He reverently bowed when his eye caught the religious garb of the visitor, and invited him to a seat, motioning, at the same time, the Lady Hilda and children to leave the apartment.

"To what good grace, my reverend father, do I owe the honor of this visit to my poor abode?" commenced the knight, graciously.

"I come, my lord of Lorne, with a message from the holy Abbot of Selles. To-morrow the Church celebrates the feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, and, as thou knowest, it is the titular solemnity of our monastery. The Abbot hath a mind to celebrate it with unusual splendor this year, and would gather about him the children of the nobility to serve in the choir. He hath, therefore, sent me

to you to ask your permission for Master Edmund."

"'Twas not necessary to demand such permission, father," replied the knight. "The wishes of the saintly Abbot are commands for me. I shall not fail to bring my boy with me to-morrow morning to the abbey."

"Nay, but 'twill be too late, then, for the children must be there to-night, that we may practice them for the morning service and adapt their costumes," said the monk.

"Well, he shall go to-night," said the father. "I shall accompany him to the abbey within an hour."

"Trouble not yourself, my good lord; he shall be safe in my hands," said the monk.

"But, good father, would he not feel more at ease if I were with him? He is young and shy of strangers."

"Oh, please yourself, my lord; of course you know best. However, I thought this habit would be sufficient protection for the child," said the monk, with some asperity.

"Forgive me, father, if word of mine hath given offense. He is an only boy, our treasure, and thou canst excuse my anxiety. He shall go with thee alone, then."

The knight called his wife, and communicated to her the monk's commission. Though very loath, she permitted him to take her child. The little fellow cried lustily, and would not be comforted. However, he was appeased by the promise of a real live pony and a bright sword.

"Will it be as big as yours, papa?" asked the child, smiling through his tears.

"Oh, not quite, my son; but it will be a brave, big one, depend upon it."

This won him from his grief completely, so, with many a blessing and tender kiss, he departed with the monk. The anxious parents followed them to the drawbridge, and many were the injunctions laid upon the religious to be careful of the boy. As the distance was but a mile to the abbey, and the moon had arisen, their anxiety was lessened, so they watched the two forms until they were lost in the gloom beyond.

"*Ave Maria, Refugium Peccatorum, ora pro eo,*" breathed the Lady Hilda, as she passed the gate.

"Amen," said the knight, fervently.

For a long time they sat in their apartment, thoughtful and silent. A strange foreboding troubled the lady. It seemed as if some coming evil had thrown its shadow about her heart. She tried to shake it off, but in vain.

"Edmund, I have such strange thoughts," said she at last.

"Of course you have, my lady ; what mother has not the first night her child sleeps under a strange roof away from her ?" replied her husband.

"But Edmund——"

"Nay, Hilda, have more fortitude ; the child is in good hands and safe enough," interrupted the knight.

"I do wish I had not permitted him to go," persisted the lady, her eyes suffused with tears.

The fears of the lady seemed to have affected her husband, for, after a short silence, he said :

"If thou likest, I will send Peter, the warder, after him."

Lady Hilda was about to reply when a loud noise was heard at the gate. Both started to their feet, turning deadly pale. The warder's voice was heard in loud, excited conversation ; then a hurried exclamation,

"Oh Edmund, dear Edmund, our boy !" gasped the lady, sinking helplessly on a chair.

But the knight spoke not, moved not ; he kept his eyes fixed on the door.

It was thrown violently open, and the Lord de Borthier, an old friend and neighbor, strode into the room.

“De Lorne, where is your son?” he asked.

“I knew it! Mother of God, help me! I knew it!” screamed the Lady Hilda, falling back in her chair and fainting.

With a spring like a madman, the Lord of Lorne was at his wife’s side in an instant. The knight of Berthier, more collected than he, called the lady’s attendants, who soon came rushing in to her assistance.

“What is the meaning of this, De Berthier?” asked the unhappy man, bravely.

“De Lorne, you are a brave man, and your wife cannot hear me now. *Your son has been carried off!*”

The effect of this announcement was awful. The strong man staggered back against the wall, and seemed to have lost all power of his limbs.

De Berthier saw he must change the father’s thoughts to another channel.

“Where is your manhood, Edmund de Lorne? Dost stand there like a puling girl without making an effort for thy son’s release? Away! don thy armor, and let us after the villains!”

With a mad start De Lorne dashed from the room. Peter the warder had, by the orders of De Berthier, already collected a trusty band of re-

tainers. Shortly after the troop, headed by the two knights, flew across the bridge and out into the moonlight. The father sought his son.

CHAPTER III.

A SOUND of lamentation is heard in the stronghold of the Lornes. It is the voice of a mother who will not be comforted. Her boy, her noble one, has been torn from her arms, and the light has passed from her crushed heart. All day long she sits moaning in her hopeless grief—by night the darkness witnesses her bitter sorrow. If sleep comes, it deludes by dreams that give her back her boy; she wakes to find it but a phantom.

“Oh, Edmund! dear child Edmund! are you gone from me forever? On earth, this bitter night, there is no heart more crushed than mine! Blessed Mother of God, you, too, had sorrow, greater far than mine. You will pity me, dear Mother, for my anguish will recall the almost infinite affliction of your dear Son’s Cross. Perhaps I was too much wrapped up in my child. Every throb of my heart was warm with his love. But no, my Mother, it

was not wrong, for I but imitated thy example. Oh, Edmund, my darling, where are you at this moment? Perhaps sick—perhaps dying! Oh, my God, do pardon me, but I never thought it would be so hard to say ‘Thy will be done!’ ”

After many weeks of fruitless search, the lord of Lorne has returned. He is a changed man now; his gentle, benevolent features are clouded with perpetual gloom. He wanders about the familiar scenes his lost one loved so well—sometimes alone, sometimes with the pale lady Hilda, sometimes with his sorrowing little daughter.

The vassals weep at the change, and their affection is, if possible, deepened. They seek every opportunity of expressing their heartfelt sympathy; he thanks them with a sad smile, and turns away.

But time, that best of physicians for the wounded heart, softens their grief. Little Edmund is never forgotten, but his memory comes, like a chastened cream, that excites grief, but leaves a consolation behind.

* * * * *

Fifteen years have passed away since the abduction of the heir of Lorne. We pass now to other climes and scenes.

At the time of which we speak, Spain was the

scene of a continued warfare and strife. A strange race, enemies to the nationality and religion of the country, possessed some of the fairest portions of its territory. The stronghold of that people, the Moors, was the city of Granada. One day a great commotion was observable amongst that people. Their chief city was alive with rushing cavalry squadrons and bands of armed men. From the country gently captured troops of swarthy warriors hurried to the metropolis of Arab power, and the shouts they set up on coming in view of it, were answered from the towering walls by cries of welcome and sounds of barbaric music.

And what caused all this bustle and confusion? War, bloody war was at hand, and the infidel sons of Arabia were preparing for the onset. The bold and warriors of Spain were within a day's march of the city, led by the great Alphonse, who had grown gray in battling with the Moors; and with him were paladins and knights of renown, famed in after song and story.

Side by side, near the king's tent, were two strange knights, who had come all the way from France to aid the good cause. As their powerful steeds pruned to the stirring roll of the drum,

their graceful riders were the object of many an admiring glance.

As it was morning, the tents were struck, and all were awaiting the appearance of the king to resume the march. Presently the monarch emerged from his pavilion, and as the splendid form of the royal warrior appeared, cheer after cheer went up from the assembled host, that made the valleys echo far and wide.

“Ha, my lords of Lorne and Berthier, ye are already prepared for the fray, I see,” said the king, vaulting easily into the saddle, as he spoke.

The two knights were no other than our old friends of the Vosges mountains.

“Not only prepared, your majesty,” replied de Lorne, bowing low, “but eager for it.”

“I’ faith, my lord, a good disposition in these times,” said the king, smiling; “and what says my lord de Berthier?”

“Very much disposed to deal lightly with such Moors as keep out of arm distance, sire,” answered de Berthier.

The king laughed long and loud at the knight’s shrewd humor, as did also the Spanish leaders that stood about him.

“De Lorne hath some old grievance to settle

with our Moorish friends, I believe, my liege," remarked an old Spanish captain.

"Ah, yes, now methinks I see the cause of thy eagerness, de Lorne," exclaimed Alphonse. "What is thy complaint?"

De Lorne grew pale, and a suppressed emotion was visible in his face. The generous hearted monarch was pained at the effect of his question, and, like a true king, courteously excused himself for his thoughtlessness.

"Nay, your majesty, 'twas but a passing spasm. The story is short. I had a dear child," his voice faltered, "he was stolen from me, and I have been a mourning man ever since. My sorrow had settled into a certain peaceful melancholy, when, a few weeks ago, a traveller, who happened to be on this side of the Pyrennees at the time of my son's capture, came to me with news that started all my energies into life once more. He had seen a child in the hands of a party of Moorish horsemen, who were speeding toward Granada. This would not have stirred me much; but he furthermore added, that as the weeping child was carried past the spot where he lay concealed, he heard him call some one by name. 'That name,' added the traveller, 'I have forgotten.' In an agony of excitement I

asked him if it was 'Hilda.' The traveller clapped his hands with energy, and said: 'It was Hilda. The very name!' I shall not say, sire, what were my feelings on hearing this announcement. I determined to join your brave warriors, and make one more effort for my son's deliverance, or, at least, glean some news of his fate. My old friend de Berthier insisted on accompanying me; but it is no more than I should expect from my dearest companion-in-arms."

As de Lorne concluded, he looked affectionately at the great, rough de Berthier, who was blushing like a little girl. Men were capable of blushing in those days.

"Well, de Lorne, exclaimed the king, "I am both sorry and glad for your mishap. Sorry for your hard loss, but glad that it gives me the assistance of two such renowned warriors."

The gratified knights bowed profoundly at the compliment.

Soon the army was on the march again. As the sun came laughing over the rugged mountain tops, its rays danced along the forest of upturned spears and burnished arms of the christian host. A few men commenced to sing the "*Ave Maris Stella!*" Company after company took up the theme, until

the glorious hymn rolled in waves of rich melody from one end of the army to the other. From an eminence, the king, chiefs and our two French knights watched the magnificent scene with throbbing hearts and kindling eyes. But as the notes came up from the mighty choir, a softer light gleamed in their eyes, and a silent tear paid homage to the pious refrain.

Oh, glorious, beautiful ages of faith! the world knew not your value until you were willfully cast away. Splendid era! when religion was the keystone of society, and every virtue made up the arch. How soon came the direful change! In the name of faith, faith was destroyed; in the name of religion, a heartless, cold formality dried up the tenderest, holiest emotions of the human heart; and when it had eliminated the very existence of God, it set up a proud throne, and haughtily sneered at the *Dark Ages*, which dared to base the social edifice on the dependence of the creature on the Creator.

CHAPTER IV.

IN a magnificent hall, glowing with a thousand lights, and gleaming with gold and marble pillars, was a rich throne of alabaster and ebony. Upon this sat Alduan III., king of the Moors. Numerous attendants, in most picturesque costume, glided in and out, and nothing broke the silence save a low, sweet harmony, that stole upon the senses like the music of a dream. Presently the tinkling of a silver bell sounded through the apartment, the door opened, and a tall figure glided up to the foot of the throne. Although young, the new-comer was powerfully built, and of most handsome features. A dark silk tunic, fastened at the waist by a purple velvet sack, fringed with gold-hide, flowing trousers and satin slippers, with solid gold buckles, set off his natural grace of form to great advantage. At his side hung a jewelled scimitar, that sparkled at every movement of the youth.

"Thou'rt late, El Said," said the king with a show of ill-humor.

"Illustrious sultan, I would I have come sooner

but for a mischance that threatened, at one time, my life and liberty. I fell in with the advance guard of the christians, and narrowly escaped capture. Several of my men were killed and I was surrounded," answered the young warrior.

"Ha! and how didst thou escape?" asked the sultan, eagerly.

El Said did not answer this question by words, but merely touched his scimitar with a significant smile.

"By the prophet's beard, El Said," laughed the sultan, "'twas a sharp argument, and, doubtless, well put. But what of those christian dogs; be they numerous?"

"Their number is not great," answered the Moorish knight, "but some of the most famous warriors of Spain are gathered under the banner of Alphonso."

"Good! good! The better the grape the richer the harvest," chuckled the monarch. "Call in the Emir Korastan."

The Emir, a small, wiry man, was commander of the Moorish army, and a relative of the sultan.

"Korastan, to-morrow thou shalt attack those dogs that have dared to beard us. The troops in ambushade shall be under the orders of the Emi

El Said. The Emir Omar shall command the horse. Make thy dispositions skilfully, general, so that not a christian shall escape. These are my commands.”

The generalissimo bowed low, and withdrew without a word.

“Emir El Said,” said the monarch, “we have given thee a strong mark of our confidence. Tomorrow’s battle will depend, to a great extent, on thee. See that thou belieest not my expectations.”

“My head shall answer for it!” said the young emir, and the conference ended.

* * * * *

Early the next morning Mass was celebrated in the christian camp, and as rank after rank approached the Holy Communion, a sight was presented that gave joy to the angels of God. A stirring sermon was preached by the chaplain, followed by a discourse from King Alphonse. Immediately afterward the troops marched past the royal pavilion, and as they paid their respects to their great chief, received compliments and words of encouragement that made them eager for the fray. The cheers that went up from the christian warriors were heard by the infidels, and their confidence lessened as they caught sight of the splendid bear-

ing and martial appearance of the chivalry of Spain.

Gradually, slowly, like two monsters thirsting for blood, the appearing forces crept nearer and nearer to one another ; a loud cry, " St. Iago for Spain," and the christians were upon their hated foe. The shock was dreadful ; the first ranks of the Moors were mowed down like corn before the reaper. In vain their generals entreated, commanded, threatened. With irresistible fury the mailed warriors of Alphonse burst, like the Alpine avalanche, through the very heart of the infidel army. The slaughter was terrific, and soon nothing was heard but faint cries for quarter. As the tide of battle surged up to the very walls of Granada, all who could dashed through the gates, and were saved from the fate of their miserable companions. From a tower within the city, the Moorish king ground his teeth with rage and grief as he saw the white plume of Alphonse ever in the midst of the fight, urging on his followers to imitate his own powerful prowess.

As the Spanish monarch, with a handful of attendants, dashed toward the city gates in order to cut off the retreat of the fugitives, the Knight of Lorne, who had performed prodigies of valor, ob-

served a large body of Moors rapidly approaching the king, and concealed by a hill that interposed. A minute more and the king would be either dead or a prisoner.'

Calling on a strong body of troops, the French knight dashed to the encounter. As the Moorish warriors that composed the band were picked troops, the struggle was desperate. De Lorne engaged in single combat with the leader of the infidels, who was no other than El Said, and, after a long combat, disarmed and slightly wounded him. The christian knight then sprang upon his enemy, and took him prisoner. The Moors, seeing their chief vanquished and captured, lost heart and fled to the adjoining mountains, closely pursued by the victorious Spaniards.

It was early in the evening when the bugle sounded through the christian army. The infidels were annihilated, and had the king had proper siege material, the stronghold of the Moors would have fallen.

Oh, it was a sight never to be forgotten, to see the christian monarch embracing his generals with streaming eyes, or to hear the grateful prayers that went up to God, to Mary and glorious Saint James for the great victory.

The Spanish army remained on the field till next day, burying the dead and collecting the spoils of the fight. In the morning a solemn Mass was said for the repose of the souls of the christian warriors who had fallen for God and country. After this duty the army marched off through the mountains, and in a few days were recounting to wondering listeners the great deeds of bold Alphonse and his brave warriors.

CHAPTER V.

“I AM truly sorry, De Lorne, at thy unsuccessful search for thy son,” said King Alphonse, as the French knight took his last leave before returning to his sad home. “Believe me, thou hast my heart-felt sympathy.”

“I am thankful for the interest your majesty displays in my regard,” answered De Lorne, sorrowfully. “But earthly sympathy can never console my afflicted heart. I feel my old wounds open again, for my hope had been great. But God’s will be done!”

“Look to Him, my dear De Lorne, for I know

“tis He alone can comfort thee,” said the monarch, with feeling.

“And now I bid your majesty farewell. May God bless thee, and may his ever blessed Mother protect thee and thy kingdom from all ill.

“Tears stood in the king’s eyes as he affectionately took the knight’s hand. After a pause, he said :

“I shall never forget, De Lorne, that I owe my life to thy bravery. If thou ever requirest a friend thou wilt find me not ungrateful, I hope. Farewell!”

As he was passing into his cabinet, he suddenly turned and said :

“De Lorne, as thou hast refused all gifts, I bethink me of one that thou wilt surely accept. Thou hast captured the Emir El Said in fair fight. Take him and try and make him a christian. It will be very pleasing to God and Our Lady.

The knight accepted the offer and departed. He sought De Berthier, who was engaged in preparing for the homeward march, and told him of the king’s strange gift. The old knight laughed at his friend, and said :

“If thou wantest thy lady murdered and thy castle burnt over thy head, thou wilt bring the infidel to thy house.”

On the way to France the young Moor was sullen and reserved. The ample folds of his turban almost concealed his features, and he kept it always so, as if to shut out the sight of his hated captors. Many a time De Lorne would gaze upon the captive's noble figure, and picture to himself what his dear Edmund would have been had he been spared to him. He tried to interest his prisoner in the magnificent scenery through which they passed, but he exhibited not the slightest feeling. Again De Lorne would grow sad as he thought that some poor Moorish mother was mourning her lost boy, and he would reproach himself as the cause of her sorrow. Common sorrow begets sympathy, and De Lorne resolved to return his captive to his people after he had taught him the truths of our holy religion.

CHAPTER VI.

• THREE months passed away after the return of the disappointed knight of Lorne, and the Moorish prisoner remained the same. He wandered about the beautiful park in a listless, moody manner, his head drooping, and his whole appearance evincing deep depression. A holy priest from the neighboring monastery had commenced instructing him in the faith, but the captive's very imperfect knowledge of French rendered the task difficult, even if the indisposition on the part of the neophyte had not increased the obstacles to the grace of God.

Lady de Lorne would often weep as she watched the unhappy stranger stealing, with measured pace, through the sombre woods about the castle. The thought of her own dear child caused her to feel a more than ordinary interest in the captive. She had striven on several occasions to draw him into a conversation; but he would either answer in monosyllables, or manifest so decided a repugnance that she desisted, in order to avoid giving him unnecessary pain.

It was not long before strange reports began to circulate concerning the stranger at the castle. Rumor, which hath such a genius of exaggeration, told dark stories, and owlish wisdom shook its head and doubted, and judged rashly, and came to unwarrantable conclusions: First, an infidel Moor was at the castle of De Lorne. Secondly, he rejected the faith. Thirdly, the knight seemed to be attached to the mysterious stranger. By combining these *data*, and draping them to his own fancy, each one concluded something was wrong.

The syndic of the parish went ahead of all others in his various surmises. He worked himself up into such a state of mind that sleep fled from his pillow. If he went out after night, he imagined he saw troops of gigantic Moors ready to pounce upon him. Every breath of wind seemed to the heated brain of the poor man to be a cry for help from some victim of the aforesaid monsters. He walked in the midst of alarms.

The end of all this is easily foreseen. The magistrates, accompanied by some of the neighboring lords, waited upon De Lorne, and demanded an explanation. This not being considered sufficiently satisfactory, the Moor was taken prisoner, and confined in the donjon of a castle to await his trial.

The distress of De Lorne and the pious lady Hilda was very great. He went to the neighboring abbot, and soon enlisted his sympathies for the poor captive. The knight's daughter, our little Hilda of the past, was a nun in the parish convent. Through her influence a novena was commenced by the inmates for the conversion of the Moor.

But all their efforts were useless. Some of the barons were not so friendly to De Lorne as his old companion, De Berthier, and through their instigation the prisoner was condemned to the stake. The few days left him were spent by the pious monks in efforts to make him embrace the faith; but in vain. The cruelty of the barons steeled him against such a course. The proud emir would not owe his life to such bitter enemies.

At length the day of execution arrived. From all the surrounding country crowds of persons hurried to witness the terrible spectacle. The general feeling that pervaded the approaching multitudes was anxiety for the poor infidel's conversion. It was a touching sight to see groups here and there, with uncovered heads, reciting the rosary as they passed along. No fear of scoffs or jeers in those days. High and low, noble and serf, mingled their orisons at the feet of Mary Immaculate.

It was the hour of sunset. The mountain tops lay bathed in the golden light, and faded away in the distance in a rich purple glow. The monastery bell had been tolling a few minutes, when a murmur, followed by a deep silence, told that the prisoner had arrived. He came forward with haughty tread, and a look of proud disdain on his fine features. Arrived at the stake, which was set up in the village square, he turned slowly around, and faced the vast multitude with a firmness that excited their pity and admiration to a ten-fold degree. As the executioners were binding him to the stake, he fixed his eyes on the sun with a wistful gaze, and then was observed, for the first time, an expression of deep sadness on his dark features. It was hard, very hard, that one so young, so noble, was looking his last on that glorious orb. The crowd was moved, and sobs and prayers were heard on every side.

De Lorne was near the poor victim, overpowered with grief. He heard his name called, and looking toward the captive, he saw him motion him to his side.

"I thank you, my lord, for all your goodness," said the emir, in a low voice.

"Do not thank me, my poor man," said De

Lorne, the tears falling fast from his eyes ; " 'tis I who am the cause of your present unhappy situation."

" No, no ; the bad barons — not you."

A priest now appeared, and holding before the captive's eyes the blessed sign of our redemption, implored him to think of his salvation.

" No, no ; they are going to kill me, and I do nothing wrong to them. If religion makes good, why are they so bad to me?" said the captive, in his broken French.

" But we, my poor creature, have had no hand or act in your death. We have tried all the means in our power to save you, but these powerful men made such representations to our king that he has confirmed their sentence. I pity you from my heart, my dear creature, and would willingly give my life to procure your eternal happiness."

As the good priest concluded, he again held up the crucifix, and strove to make an impression on the condemned man.

Although the Moor seemed touched by the priest's words, he shook his head sadly, and turned as much away as his confined position would admit. The father then left him in despair.

Presently the gate of the convent opened, and a

train of nuns came forth, reciting the prayers for the dying. The crowd fell back to the right and left as the holy virgins approached the fatal pile. Immediately following the mother abbess was De Lorne's daughter, the tears rolling down her pale cheeks as she prayed for the doomed victim.

"*Ave Maria, Refugium Peccatorum, oro pro eo,*" prayed sister Hilda, as she turned from the poor captive.

A strange, dreamy light passed over the prisoner's face as she passed away. His eyes followed her receding form.

The executioner approached with the torches. Then it was that the captive gave a cry so loud, so agonizing, so mournful, that the multitude held their breath.

"That woman in black! That woman in black!" cried the Moor, looking wildly towards the nuns.

The excited priest hurried toward the nuns, and called on them to return.

"Thank God, and our dear Lady," exclaimed the abbess, "grace hath touched his heart."

Sister Hilda trembled like an aspen as she approached once more the captive.

"Lady!" exclaimed the prisoner, "you said a short prayer for me just now. Say it again."

The crowd pressed around the stake, in breathless expectation. De Lorne, with a world of undefined anxiety in his heart, stood rooted to the spot. Then came the prayer :

“Ave Maria, Refugium Peccatorum, ora pro eo !”

A flash of light broke through the captive's soul. The dream of his manhood was a reality. With a desperate effort he broke the bonds from his arms. He stretched them toward the nun, and said : “Hilda !”

Oh ! the piercing cry of joy that passed from the nun's heart as she fell fainting into the captive's arms : “Edmund, dear brother Edmund !”

A rush as of many waters came like a cloud over De Lorne's soul. All consciousness fled from him ; but a sunlight of joy filled his breast. At last he walked mechanically toward the stake. He fancied he saw a dark form lying motionless in the arms of the prisoner. He saw some men cutting the bonds to set the captive free. A voice said, in his ear, “De Lorne, thank our dear Lady ; your son is found.” Then the bewildered knight knew no more.

* * * * * * *

Lady de Lorne sat in her room, telling her beads for the conversion of the poor captive. To tell the

truth, the prayer of the poor lady Hilda was a very distracted one. Emerge as she would, the agonized form of the wretched Moon was continually in her mind, and she would find herself shuddering for his unhappy fate. At length a loud shout came faintly on the breeze, and she fell on her knees, motionless and terror-stricken.

But instead of coming, the cries continued without interruption, nay, more strange still, they seemed to be approaching the castle. "What can it be? Have they liberated him?" thought the lady, as she approached a window.

In a few moments the multitude appeared, dancing, singing and shouting as if they were mad. But what is that she sees? Her husband and daughter hanging by the young Moon's side! A filer grew over her eyes, her limbs trembled under her, she crept to a seat, pale, and gasping for breath. She heard a noise in the hall, and sounds of joy and delight. She strives to rise, but cannot. The door opens. "The moment has come!

"There! there! take him, Hilda! for as true as God reigns above us, he is our son!" shouted De Lorne, in an ecstasy of joy.

With her dear one's kiss upon her lips, the happy mother faints away, but soon recovers, for she has

found a new life in the son "who was lost, but is found."

Why shall we dwell upon that meeting—the questions asked—the stories told—the loving embraces, again and again renewed? And then, when their joy had calmed a little, what a fervent prayer went up to the bright throne of Mary—a cry of love and thanksgiving—that she had deigned to pity them and restore their boy!

The monk who had come for the child on the eventful night of her disappearance, was a Moor who had been vanquished in battle by De Lorne. The infidel vowed revenge, and considered, justly, that nothing would accomplish his design more effectually than to strike his foe in his dearest possession—his child.

He carried him off to Spain, and though hating the boy at first, on account of the father, ended by loving him, and at his death left him all his riches. The cunning Moor had never spoken about religion to the boy; hence he had grown up rather devoid of all religion than possessing a false one. The childhood's petition to Mary had lingered like a dream in his mind, and often he strove to recall it, but failed. He was high in favor with Alduan, the Moorish king, when the events recorded took place.

It was a happy day for the vassals of De Lorne, and the neighboring people, when, after erecting a beautiful statue to Our Lady of the Vosges, they saw their young Edmund, side by side with his good parents, approach the holy table for the first time. Joyful tears were shed, and many prayers breathed for his welfare. And as the noble party, surrounded by the most loving of friends, and the kindest of knights, rode toward the castle of De Lorne, the multitude fell on their knees, and with one accord cried :

“Ave Maria, Refugium Peccatorum, oro pro nobis!”

THE GALLEY SLAVE.

AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF ST. VINCENT OF PAUL.

CHAPTER I.

THE sentence of the law was pronounced. Neither the eloquent pleading of the advocate, nor the frank avowal of the accused, which greatly mitigated the crime in the opinion of all who heard him, nor his marks of true contrition, could touch the inflexible justice of the judges. Michael Frayno was doomed to pass fifteen years in the galleys.

Michael was not one of those criminals whose appearance indicates a wicked heart. On the contrary, everything in his person was calculated to inspire confidence and good-will, and although but a simple mechanic, yet his clear, open face proclaimed the intelligence and activity of his mind, and although sorrow had dulled the fire and animation of his eyes, it had not destroyed the native goodness of his soul, which looked through them ;

and in all that crowded court-room, a more prepossessing person could not be found than the one now branded as a *Galley Slave*.

Behind the bench upon which he was seated stood two females ; with intense agony depicted on every feature, they had intently followed every step of the trial. Every time that an expression of agony blanched the face of Frayno, he turned towards them, seeking, as it were, for strength in their love. One was advanced in years, and from her resemblance to the accused, and the tenderness with which she regarded him, it was evident that she was his mother. The other seemed scarcely thirty years ; her face was pale as marble, and this pallor served but the more distinctly to reveal its rustic beauty ; the cap of the Norman peasant, which covered her head, could not conceal the luxuriant hair which, escaping from its folds, fell in rich curls around her neck ; her eyes were red and swollen with weeping, and heavy lines of grief had made deep furrows around her tightly-compressed lips.

No one could look at her without feeling the deepest emotion of compassion. Even the judges turned aside their eyes, long used to scenes of suffering, lest this touching spectacle of woe

should excite their souls to compassion, and soften the rigor of their duty. Her sorrow was, indeed, touching in the extreme, because she was the wife of the accused, and she loved her husband—touching, above all, as she stood surrounded by her three children, the oldest not four, and the youngest, a babe, which she clasped in her arms.

As the judge pronounced aloud the sentence of the law, Michael bowed his head and burst into tears. The young mother clasped her babe convulsively in her arms, and, sinking fainting upon the rough bench, lost, for the time, at least, the knowledge of all their miseries in her unconsciousness, while, in tones of sharp anguish, the voice of Michael's mother was heard above that of the judge :

“Fifteen years ! ah, how short a time does it take for such words to pass from your lips ! But what will my poor boy do during the long agony of fifteen years, and who will support us ? Who will give food to his famishing children ? What have we done that we should all be condemned to perish from hunger and misery ? What crime have these three children committed, that you leave them to starve, while you drag their poor father to prison ?”

It was in vain that she was told that the law had

used all possible indulgence in the case of her son. "The law!" she exclaimed. "And what is your law, and who made it? Cruel tyrants, who had neither parents nor children!"

Poor Michael! his heart seemed withered; all joy was forever banished, and in despair he followed his jailor, exclaiming, in heartrending accents:

"Oh Lord, my God, I know that I am guilty! but, for the sake of my poor family, wilt Thou not grant me pardon?"

His afflicted family followed him to the prison gates, and, by their touching importunities, gained admission to his cell.

"We can only weep with him," said Loysa, "but our tears will, at least, give him courage, and perhaps he will be able to console us."

They found the prisoner lying on the floor of his cell, a prey to the most horrible anguish and despair; his clothes were in pieces, and his hair and beard covered with dirt. His mother threw her arms around his neck and wept aloud, while Loysa stood by in speechless sorrow. The children, awe-struck with the obscurity of the place, remained silent and fearful, but God has placed in the thoughtless simplicity of children unforeseen con-

solutions. Jules, the eldest, found a morsel of dry bread in the corner, and as he had eaten nothing since the preceding evening, he joyfully picked it up, and ran with it in triumph to his mother.

“Do not touch it, my child; it is all your poor father has to eat.”

“Let him keep it,” said the criminal. “I am not hungry, and besides, I have no need for food.”

“O Michael, my husband, do not grow discouraged. We are miserable, it is true, but if you lose hope, what will remain for us?”

“It is not for myself that I grieve—I am guilty, and it is but right that I should suffer—but for you. It would have been a thousand times better for me to have thrown myself from the roof of our house, as I thought of doing.”

“Michael, Michael, speak not such wild words! And after all, fifteen years will soon pass away.”

“Ah, if I could only have died before I was condemned, they would have had compassion on you, and perhaps some charitable folks might have helped you to raise the children; but who will now assist the mother and wife of the galley slave?”

“Be not uneasy about us,” replied his mother. “Loysa and I will work for the children. I am old, it is true, but I am strong, and as long as I can work—”

"In a year or two," interrupted Loysa, "Jules will be able to do something, and then, is not our good God in heaven, and the Blessed Virgin? Ah, surely, they will not let us perish!"

"We were so happy together in our little cottage. By what fatality did I bring you into this dreadful state? Oh what misery have I brought upon you all? Loysa, can you ever forgive me?"

"What you did was for love of me, my poor Michael. Do not then, I beseech you, let such wild thoughts pass through your mind."

"Alas! at the moment when I wreaked my vengeance, I thought of you. I had a glimpse of the misery I was preparing for you, but passion does not take time for reflection."

"Think not upon the past, dear Michael. I know your excitable nature, and there are circumstances in which you are not master of yourself, but you have always been good for us."

"Yet it would have been far better for you, poor Loysa, not to have married me. I was destined to be miserable, and any one else would have made you happy. Yet Loysa, do not forget me when I am in Marseilles, bound to the galley for fifteen long years. Oh, Loysa, in my misfortune do not condemn me. If I ever have it in my power, I'll surely send something to you and the children."

“Be not uneasy about us, dear Michael, but keep up your own courage, and rest assured that your memory will never leave our hearts.”

“And you, poor mother, you, at least, I shall never see again.”

“Please God and you will, my son ; they may put you in irons, but they won’t chain me, nor put big balls around my feet to keep me from walking. And when I can’t stand it any longer without seeing you, you may be sure that I’ll start off for Marseilles.

CHAPTER II.

THE day appointed for the departure of the galley slaves arrived. The evening before, Michael bade a tender farewell to his weeping family—a farewell that seemed the last on earth. He walked with his head bowed down, under the shame of his crime, and seeking to hide his face from the crowd that pressed, with eager curiosity, around them. After they had left the suburbs of the city, and the idle crowd had dispersed, Michael thought he

caught a glimpse of two women following them. He cast a furtive glance at them, while two big tears rolled down his cheeks and fell upon his manacled arms. They were his wife and mother. Loysa carried their youngest child in her arms the second was asleep upon her back, sustained by a handkerchief tied around her shoulders, while poor little Jules, holding fast his grandmother's hand, manfully kept pace with his mother. The child soon recognized his father in the midst of the gang, and joyfully cried, with a loud voice : " Father, dear father, here we are, mother and the baby and all of us."

Poor Michael turned around, and tried to smile in the midst of his tears.

At the first halting-place the little group seated themselves on the green sward, and Michael threw them a piece of his bread, but the overseer of the gang would not let them come near enough to him. All day long they followed in the footsteps of the condemned, and at nightfall sought shelter in a house adjoining the inn where the galley slaves slept. Their pitiful tale touched the hearts of the charitable people, and they kindly gave them beds and refreshment. The women slept but little ; at daybreak they again set out, in order to be in ad-

vance of the gang, and to have an opportunity of seeing Michael as he passed.

"Loysa," said the latter, do not come any further; you will make yourself sick, and perhaps die. What, then, will the children do? Go back, in God's name, to Souberos."

"No," she replied, "I'll follow you as long as I am able. Alas! we have but too many years to remain apart!"

And so the little group continued patiently to follow the sad cavalcade during five long, weary days. Even the most hardened of the criminals could not but admire such devotedness, and they all vied in sharing their rations with the heroic family. The overseers themselves relaxed their severity, and Michael was permitted to receive the kisses of his children, and to converse with his wife and mother.

At length they reached Marseilles, and were obliged to separate. Poor Frayno, with sobs and tears, embraced these beings so dear to him, who innocently bore the sorrowful weight of his crime. Loysa checked her tears, while she spoke most cheering words of courage and comfort.

"Keep ever alive, dear Michael, your confidence in God and the Blessed Virgin, and we shall invoke

them every day, and who knows but we may yet obtain your pardon ! At least, prayer will lighten the heavy weight of your chains."

"I do not weep for myself," said Frayno ; "I am guilty, and it is but right that I should suffer. But I weep for you, Loysa, and for my mother ; I weep for these poor children ; what will become of them ?"

"They will see hard days, it is true, but our Blessed Mother in heaven will watch over their innocence, and have compassion on their weakness. As long as our good God preserves our strength, they shall not be in want for anything."

"Oh, Loysa, what a life for you ! and were it not for me, what a happy future was before us."

"I should not be unhappy, Michael, if you would only cheer up and have more confidence in God, and in the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin."

"Ah, yes, I had forgotten God, and He has, indeed, justly punished me. I shall ask His forgiveness, and in cheerfully submitting to my punishment, perhaps He may pardon me."

The heroism of his good wife inspired Michael with new life, and he seemed quite resigned at the moment he reached the door of the building which

served for the dwelling of the galley slaves. He wiped his eyes, bade a last farewell to all his family, and entered into this horrible prison, there to remain during the long space of fifteen years. Then it was that the brave heart of poor Loysa failed her for the first time. She seated herself upon the ground, and bowing her head upon her knees, wept long and bitterly.

“Cheer up, my child,” said the poor old mother. “We cannot pass the night here in the open air; see! the children are crying with hunger, and we must seek some place to shelter them from the night winds.”

“Oh, leave me here to die!” exclaimed the poor woman.

“And so you would leave an old woman like me to provide for the three children, and I so old that I can scarcely drag myself along! And so they will have to go a begging! A nice trade that will be for little Jules and the baby! Come along, then, Loysa; you are still young, your husband is not yet dead, and we will all come to see him at Easter.”

So, taking the babe in one hand, and leading Loysa by the other, the galley slave’s old mother sought, in the poorest portion of the great city, a night’s rest for the afflicted family.

CHAPTER III.

THERE are certain modern writers who aim at being more charitable than our Lord Himself in the gospel. In their dreams of philanthropy they regard the midnight assassin and the highway robber as the unhappy victim of tyrannical laws. Society, according to their theory, is a stern master, who recompenses with chains heroic virtues which it does not understand. In France, particularly, this class of writers has become most popular with the thoughtless mass, while in our own country it argues a most sympathizing spirit with this morbid feeling, when we see with what eagerness the translations of such works are read.

God forbid that we should excite hatred or execration against those unhappy beings who, in the confines of a prison, or the chains of the galleys, expiate their past crimes. But after an hour passed in the galleys, for instance, or in one of our own prisons, where we see the cynicism of the condemned—their hardened hearts—when we think of their victims, it requires a great effort of charity to

pity them ; we are filled with feelings of disgust, horror and indignation, and we are almost tempted to accuse the weakness and too great indulgence of the law.

And in this respect time has neither ameliorated nor deepened these dark features of humanity, since the day when our story opens, and an unknown priest entered the galleys of Marseilles, to exercise his charitable functions among the crowd of poor wretches who were paying the penalty of their past crimes. By the air of kindness impressed upon his face, by the sweetness of his voice, the unction of his words, and the gentleness with which he stopped before each criminal, to question and console him, it was easy to see that he was not actuated either by vain curiosity or indifference.

“Why are you here, my friend ?” said the priest.

“Oh, I don’t know ; I guess because I wasn’t guilty ; I found a sack of money lying idle in the bureau of a rich old miser ; as I had no key, I opened the drawer with a chisel—and for such a trifle as that, they had the cruelty to put me here for eight years.”

“I,” said another, “am no more guilty than the other ; I was a doctor, and was often called to see

rich old men when they were sick ; so, when their heirs paid me well, I helped them to die."

Another exclaimed : " Well, I never killed any one ; and yet, just think how those judges treated me ! My uncle made a will in my favor, but my relatives were so good that they would never recognize his signature to it. So they bribed the judges to put me in the galleys for forgery. But his money is all safe — I defy them to find it."

All, robbers, murderers and villains of every stamp, narrated the most execrable crimes with a tranquility that made the priest shudder.

These unhappy beings were deaf to that voice which God places in us, and which judges our actions even before they are known by man. Conscience, for them, existed no longer, and their souls seemed deprived of all moral intelligence. But among that brutal crowd the priest recognized one whose countenance bore the traces of the deepest despair and anguish. Rightly judging that here was a heart not entirely corrupt, he approached, and asked his name.

" Michael Frayno, of Souberos, in Provence."

" Have you been here a long time ?"

" About a month ; but that is nothing in comparison to the fifteen years I have yet to remain,

and, nevertheless, I am already at the end of all my patience and courage."

"You seem good and honest. Why, then, have you been condemned to pass fifteen years in chains?"

"Oh, father, I do not say that I am innocent; oh, no, I am indeed a great criminal, and I merit my punishment. I do not murmur on my own account, but for my poor family; my mother, my wife and children, who in their poverty and distress suffer more than I do."

"Ah, I understand, your labor was necessary for their support; but do not despair, God is very good, and He will come to their aid. I am not rich myself, but I will interest some of my friends in them, who will relieve their wants."

"Oh, my father, what consolation do you not give my poor heart. May the Blessed Virgin obtain for you a hundred-fold the happiness you give me. The moment my poor children have something to keep life in them, I shall no longer feel the weight of my chains."

The language of the galley slave interested more and more the priest, and he continued the conversation.

"You are right in invoking the Mother of God,

for she will give you resignation, and will console you in your sufferings."

"Alas, my father, for myself I am only worthy of contempt and punishment."

"We must all, my friend, expiate our faults, either in this world or the next. Those who have done voluntary penance here, will have a less rigorous account to render when they appear before God in the next world. Then, your repentance, in purifying your soul, will become the subject of your eternal recompense. Have you been to confession?"

"Not yet; you are the first priest I have seen since my arrival; but I am now ready to make it, if you have time to hear it."

"To-morrow I shall return for your confession. In the meantime, let me know for what crime you are here in prison."

"Father, I was near committing murder."

"It is certainly a great crime; nevertheless, as your punishment is not for life, the court must have found some mitigating circumstances in the case."

"If you have leisure to hear me, father, I will tell you all about it."

Father Vincent seated himself on a bench near

the galley slave, and the latter, wiping his brow, commenced as follows :

“ Thomas Choquez and I were enemies from our earliest childhood. We inherited our hatred for each other from our mothers, without knowing any cause for it. As I grew older, I asked my mother what was the reason of the enmity which existed between her and her nearest neighbor ; she evaded my questions, and to this day I am ignorant of the origin of it. My mother, as well as the mother of Thomas, was a widow, and we were their only children. As we grew older, we were prepared by the good pastor of our village church, to make our first communion at the same time. I was selected to read aloud the prayers before and after receiving. My poor mother, proud of the honor conferred upon her son, had made me a new suit of clothes out of my father's old ones, which were admired by the whole village. I beg your pardon, my good father, for taking up your time with such trifles, but I wish you to know me, just as I am, so that you may be able to judge me afterwards. It seems that Dame Choquez left no means untried to turn my mother and myself into ridicule the next day, and there were not wanting busy bodies to repeat, in our little cabin, all that she said. She

became very angry ; I was not old enough to distinguish the exaggerations in all these bickerings, so I shared my mother's anger, and only waited an occasion to revenge myself on the Choquez, mother and son.

“ The next Sunday, as I was on my way to Mass, just where the road ran past a little stream, I met them both. Thomas left his mother, and came up to me, saying : ‘ Good day, Michael.’ For an instant I did not reply, but the good instincts of childhood triumphed, and in spite of maternal hatred, I cordially held out my hand to the child of our enemy, when he sprang forward, and snatching from my head the fine hat which my mother had made with so much pains, he threw it into the stream. In an instant I felt the blood boil in my veins. Thomas sought to escape by running to his mother for protection ; but I caught him, and, in spite of his blows and resistance, I threw him into the water. I did wrong, and the next instant I repented of my anger, and hastened to draw him out of the water. His mother then rushed upon me, threatening me in the most violent manner, so that my only thought was to make my escape. When I informed my mother of all that had taken place, instead of reprimanding me, she praised me

for what she called my manly spirit. In the meantime, Dame Choquez made a great complaint against me to the priest, taking care to say nothing of the provocation her son had given me. In consequence, I was most severely reprimanded by our good pastor. Here again my mother took my part, and I, as a child, not dreaming that my mother could be deceived, began to feel sentiments of hatred against the good pastor and the Church take root in my heart. As I grew older, I neglected my religious duties, and finished, at length, by not even going to Mass on Sundays. My mother urged me in vain to accompany her—I paid no attention to her words. The only days on which I ever accompanied her to Mass were the festivals of the Blessed Virgin—devotion to Our Lady was the only vestige left of my early piety.

“The animosity that existed between Thomas and myself increased with years; and when we both sought to wed the same person we became most deadly enemies. If Loysa had not preferred me, I believe I would have killed Thomas, so reckless and lost to my religious duties had I become. He soon after left our native village, and for four years Loysa, my mother and myself led the happiest life. Under the gentle influence of my good

wife, I was fast returning to the religious sentiments of my early childhood, when Thomas Choquez came back to Souberos, far more dissipated than when he left. One evening, for the first time since my marriage, I went to pass an hour or two at the village inn; Thomas entered with some of his drunken companions, and when he saw me he began speaking in the most insulting manner against the fair fame of my wife. On the instant I would have leveled him to the earth, but I was restrained by those around me. Excited by wine, my brain seemed on fire; I followed him home, and attacked him just as he was entering the door. He tried to defend himself from the blows of my heavy stick; the struggle aroused his mother—then I had two enemies to combat. I can scarcely recall what passed, but when I returned home Loysa uttered fearful cries at the blood with which I was covered.

“The next morning the news spread rapidly through the village that I had attacked Thomas and nearly killed him. Loysa and my mother urged me to fly to a strange country, and they would follow with the children. But as Thomas still lived, I thought justice was on my side, so I let myself be arrested, feeling sure that I would be acquitted, but I was condemned to the galleys. I

do not murmur at this, for I feel that I am a criminal, and must do penance. But the judges need not have given me fifteen years of galley life, for I am sure I shall never see their end. The memory of my poor family in want is killing me by inches, and I shall die of a broken heart long before the fifteen years have passed away ; for myself it matters but little, but when I think that, far off in Souberos, five hungry mouths are wanting bread to eat, my heart becomes as lead, and my brain is on fire."

Here, with his voice choked with sobs, Michael finished his simple tale. The good priest, deeply touched by his keen sufferings, remained silent, while his tender heart was busy devising some means to relieve him. Suddenly he arose, and without saying a word to Michael, he walked off in the direction of the officer in command of the galleys.

CHAPTER IV.

SADLY and slowly, and in the midst of many privations, the days passed over Michael's little family at Souberos. Poor Loysa sank rapidly under her sorrows; she was but the merest shadow of the stout, healthy peasant whom we first saw in the court-room. She could not go out to work, for the three children needed all her care; she took some spinning into the house, but in her feeble state she could scarcely do the work of a child.

Poor old Julia held up bravely. At the age of sixty she seemed to have recovered the strength of her youth. During the autumn harvests of grain and fruit she had plenty work, but with the short, cold winter days all this ended; and then the poor old woman might be seen going from house to house seeking work, but seldom finding it.

"Mother, I fear we shall have to sell Michael's carpenter's tools," said Loysa, with a sigh, as Julia one day entered, wearied and disheartened.

"And what will the poor boy do when he returns?" quickly replied her mother.

“When he returns! Alas! where will we be then? A year of the fifteen has not yet passed, and it seems like an endless age. But even should Michael live to come back to us, his tools will all be eaten up with the rust, and they will be of no use to him.”

“And would you sell, for a mere trifle, things that cost him so much? Ah, you do not know how saving he was, and how carefully he laid them by, one after another. Poor child! to me they seem a part of himself, and when I am well nigh weary unto death, if I just go into his little shop and see his saw, chisel and hammer, it gives new life to my old body, and I come out quite consoled.”

As week succeeded week, it was plain to see that Loyisa's strength was fast failing her. She felt that the day was not far distant when she would no longer be able to leave her bed. She dreaded to die and leave her children, but at the same time she could not but smile at the thought of being released from all the woes and apprehensions that overwhelmed her.

One night, as she lay tossing on her bed with the wild fever coursing through her veins, she heard a noise at the door; again, a second time, a footfall and then a knock. Ah! neither heart nor ear

could mistake that sound. "Oh, mother, hasten, hasten! Michael has come!"

Yes; it was, indeed, her husband, the galley slave! But how had he contrived to leave his prison? Had he eluded the guards and made his escape, and might not the officers of justice, even now, be on his track? Deep joy prevented the happy wife and mother from thinking on this subject. They overwhelmed him with caresses; the sleeping children were aroused, and closely pressed in their father's arms. The mightiest monarch on earth might well have envied the happiness of Michael Frayno and his little family, as they stood in a group, laughing and crying for very joy. The old mother was the first to moderate her feelings. She thought of her son's journey, so, hastily lighting a lamp, she began to seek for something for him to eat.

"Oh, how tired you look!" said Loysa.

"And well I may," replied Michael, "for three days and three nights I have walked, without taking even a half hour's rest. But, thank God, I find you all alive; this pays me for all I have suffered. Mother, do not trouble about anything to eat; I am not hungry, but very thirsty; if you have a wee drop of wine I'll take it."

Wine! the poor family, although living in the country of vineyards, had not seen wine within their doors for many a long day; happily, a few morsels of dry bread were left from the children's supper, which Loysa forced Michael to eat. Then, after he had, in a measure, rested himself, she asked:

"How did you get out of the galleys?"

"Well, I think you must all have prayed to the Blessed Virgin for me, and she obtained a miracle for me from our good God."

"But will you not be taken up again by the officers?"

"Ah, how could the officers possibly arrest me when Our Lady deigned to release me? See here, Loysa, if anybody ever tells you that the angels have appeared on earth in certain places, be careful never to say that you do not believe it, for I, myself, your husband, who am now speaking to you, all unworthy as I am, have seen one, touched one and talked to one. And this angel loaded himself with my chains, and took my place at the galleys, where he has been working as a felon for the last three days."

"Oh, Loysa, words can never tell how heart-broken I was in that frightful prison. Day and

night my thoughts were constantly with you, and the tears fell like rain from my eyes. The Blessed Virgin, to whom I constantly prayed, took pity on me, and one day I found an angel at my side, that I think she must have sent to me. He was dressed like a priest, (because, you know, priests should always be the best men living,) ; he came up to me, and pretended he didn't know for what crime I was there. You see, mother, he wanted to find out if I would tell the truth. Well, I never suspected for a moment who he was, but took him for a man like myself ; but still I told him everything just as it happened, without making any excuses for myself. So, when he found that I did not tell a falsehood, he rewarded me right off. He begged the jailor to let him take my place, and give me liberty to come back to you. Now, nobody but an angel could ever have made the jailor consent to such a thing, and I am sure," continued Michael, "that this good angel will fly up to heaven just at any time he wants to go back to his bright home, near God.'

EPILOGUE.

THE Countess of Joigny, one of St. Vincent's penitents, having lost sight of him for some time,

and fearing that his charity had got him into some difficulty, caused search to be made for him in every direction. At length he was discovered working among the criminals in the galleys ; but before he would leave, he insisted on obtaining a full pardon for Michael Frayno. This was finally granted, and St. Vincent, once more at liberty, continued his work of converting the galley slaves.



JANE OF PORTUGAL.

[This incident is taken from the life of Jane, or Juana, of Portugal, whose feast is celebrated January 28.]

HIGH festival was held in the grand old city of Lisbon. From early dawn her principal streets were richly adorned with gay garlands and gorgeous tapestry. The pavements were carpeted with softest verdure and aromatic leaves; every window and balcony was filled with richly dressed spectators, holding fragrant crowns and bouquets.

At the first gleam of day the very atmosphere seemed alive with the many sounds of joy and triumph, which hailed the fleet of ships that had cast anchor in the port during the night. The morning sun, in resting on the bronzed faces of the sailors, disclosed to their eager gaze the bright shores of their native land, and from the waves arose to the clouds the joyous huzzas with which the army on the vessels and the crowds upon the

shore saluted each other at the same instant. The arms of parents, spouses, children and friends, were eagerly extended from both sides; many hearts flew across the waves; despite the distance, many eyes sought to recognize long absent friends. These vessels, gaily ornamented with trophies, and laden with the spoils of war, bore across the waters the brave troops who had moistened with the blood of their victories the distant Moorish plains.

The attention of all those whom curiosity drew to the quay, were directed to the vessel which bore the king. It was a magnificent felucca, on which was erected a tent of royal purple and gold; gay pendants and wreaths of roses and myrtles floated from every mast, and wound in graceful serpentine curvatures around the sails. This galley, conquered from the Moorish Cid, was the first to advance towards the shore, guided by twenty-four Arabian oarsmen, enveloped in their white robes, and wearing on their heads the azure turbans of their country.

Alphonsus V., whose mighty exploits gained him the surname of the African, was returning to his kingdom with all the pomp of a conqueror. The people, who loved him, and who had enjoyed all the blessings of peace under the wise regency of the

infanta, greeted his return with loud and enthusiastic cries of joy and delight.

Even the heavens seemed to share in the universal happiness of the Lisbonese, and enhanced the *éclat* of the festival by all the splendor of a cloudless sky and golden sunshine.

The bells and chimes of every church filled the air with their notes of loud acclaim and jubilee. At this signal, the bishops, judges, and all the nobility of the city, formed in procession to welcome their king.

The infanta, Donna Juana, headed the brilliant *cortége*. She was universally regarded as the most accomplished princess in Europe, and the blessings poured forth by all ranks attested the leniency and skill of her administration.

On this day she had adorned her natural beauty with all the magnificence of royalty. Attired as for her nuptials, her noble brow blazed with the sparkling rays of the precious gems that encircled it. Seated upon a superb Andalusian steed, of milky whiteness, richly caparisoned with housings of purple and gold, her very appearance excited a spontaneous burst of admiration from all lips.

Beautiful as she was, all her external charms were forgotten at the sound of her voice, whose sweet melody captivated all ears.

As the Moorish felucca touched the wharf, the king sprang on shore, and mounted a noble charger magnificently caparisoned for his royal rider ; his son rode at his side, and the entire army swelled the ranks of his triumphal procession.

When the kingly conqueror saw his beautiful daughter, he checked the course of his fiery steed, and his heart filled to overflowing with joy, pride and admiration at the transcending loveliness of his heart's treasure.

"O Lord, my God !" he mentally exclaimed, "do not punish me for this excess of joy. Thou hast, on this day, concentrated within my heart all happiness. A victorious king, I have seen my son render his name illustrious ; while battling at my side, he has proved himself worthy a kingdom greater than mine. And on my triumphal return, I find my daughter ornamented by the choicest gifts and graces of nature. Lord, my God ! do not make me expiate too cruelly Thy favors."

Dismounting to embrace his daughter, he said :

"Have I not reason, my daughter, to return thanks to God ? There is not a king in all Europe who would not be jealous of my happiness, if he were to see thee."

"My happiness is equally great, my father, in

seeing you return ; for you well know my love for you, and I have hastened to remit into your hands the heavy burden of the regency with which you charged me."

"The acclamations of my subjects teach me that I would be wrong in depriving myself of thy lights, my daughter, and I shall be careful that thy presence is not withdrawn from my councils."

"Thanks for your love, my father ; and since you evince so much for me, I shall not hesitate to ask a mighty favor from your hands."

"Fear no refusal, my daughter. On such a day as this, I affirm, on my word as king and cavalier, thou canst obtain from me all thou couldst desire, even were it the half of my kingdom."

"Ah, I am not so ambitious ; all I ask is your permission to leave the world and retire to a convent."

"What dost thou say, my child ? Ha ! the monastery fitting for thy abode is the palace of a king, and the veil thou wilt wear is the nuptial one."

"No, my father, this cannot be ; and if you love me, you will to-day give your consent to the fulfilment of my desire."

"Wouldst thou, then, grieve my heart now, for the first time in thy life, and embitter all the joy of

this day's triumph? Leave me, at least, time to embrace thee, and we will consult on this subject at a later period."

"If you so wish it, father, I shall defer it; but bear in mind that you have already pledged me your word."

"I shall keep it. Yet you render the accomplishment very painful. Ah, I foresaw," continued the king, speaking to himself, "that my happiness could not be without alloy. Even at the first hour, sorrow comes to destroy its sweetness."

It was in reality a great sorrow for him to be obliged to separate from his daughter, and his face bore traces of sadness until the end of the feast, which, in his changed mood, seemed interminable, so anxious was he to speak in private to the infanta, and persuade her to relinquish this idea of leaving the world.

He made all the opposition consistent with his promise, using most eloquent arguments to change her mind. Donna Juana remained inflexible; and the king, who feared God, and respected his own word, could not break a promise so solemnly given.

It was a sad day at the court of Portugal when the princess, after having distributed all her jewels to her maids of honor, and given large alms to the

poor, took the road to the convent of Oviêdo, which she had selected ; her brother John, and a great number of prelates and nobles, accompanied her on the route, all clad in mourning robes, as though they were following her to the tomb.

She alone preserved a tranquil and serene air. On arriving at the monastery gate, she tenderly embraced her brother, and bid an affectionate farewell to all her friends, graciously thanking them for this last mark of their esteem. And then the convent doors closed behind her.

She did not remain long at peace in her cell. God permitted her to pass through many temptations, in order to strengthen her vocation.

The son of the Emperor Frederic III., Maximilian, Archduke of Austria and King of the Romans, hearing of the eminent virtues and talents of the infanta, sent ambassadors to Lisbon to solicit her hand.

When they were informed of the decision she had taken, they addressed themselves to her brother, Prince John, and so skilfully insinuated themselves into his good graces, that he promised to employ all his influence with his sister to persuade her to change her mind.

He visited her in her convent home and ex-

hausted all his eloquence in praises of Maximilian, whom he represented as a magnificent, pious, loyal and chivalric prince. Then he extolled his power and wealth, and expatiated on the immense advantages that would accrue to Portugal from so illustrious an alliance.

As soon as Juana understood the import of all these praises, she interrupted him, saying :

“I thank thee, brother, for thy constant affection for me, but I have placed my happiness in solitude, and not in the honor of a royal marriage. My only desire is to labor in silence and obscurity at the work of my salvation. Leave me, then, to follow in peace the inclinations of my heart, and give me a new proof of affection by persuading the archduke to abandon his intention.”

The prince could not withstand the heroic firmness of his sister. On his report to the ambassadors, they advised their master to think no more of the princess.

Alphonsus, the African, died in 1481. His son succeeded him, under the title of John II.; from the commencement of his reign he displayed all the qualities of a great king, particularly a rare energy of character, of which he had great need in the troubled state of Europe at that epoch.

Richard III. reigned in England ; this monarch, so insecurely seated on the throne which he had usurped by the murder of his two nephews, sought the alliance of Portugal, offering a most advantageous treaty to John, and proposing to ratify it by espousing the infanta.

John assembled his council, and informed them of Richard's proposal. The lords were unanimous in their opinion that it should be immediately accepted. It is true the infanta had made her vows, but a dispensation could be procured, and she was in duty bound to sacrifice her love for the religious life to the vital interests of the kingdom. Encouraged by these opinions, the king sent for his aunt, Donna Filipa, and besought her to join her entreaties to his, in order to persuade the infanta to leave her convent.

Together they visited her. After a good deal of embarrassment, the king said to his sister : " Formerly you refused the honor of accepting the title of the archduke ; he is now emperor, and would be my most powerful and precious ally had it not been for you. Yet I do not reproach you, Juana. You acted according to your conscience, and you could not see the many difficulties that would surround my throne. But now you can obtain for me the

friendship of the King of England. My council, our aunt and myself, believe that you cannot conscientiously resist, and we have now come to obtain your consent."

"Sire," continued Donna Filipa, "your sister will not refuse you. She has too much good sense and judgment not to understand that her position is different from ordinary females. They may dispose of their persons and lives, by following their inclinations, without entailing any injury to the kingdom; but those to whom God gives royal birth, belong to the states before they belong to themselves, and it is their duty to sacrifice their private happiness to the public welfare."

"If I have taken the veil, signora," replied the infanta, with modesty and firmness, "it was with the full knowledge and entire consent of the king, my father. He did not believe that my retreat would endanger his crown or his kingdom."

"Were the king, my brother, alive to-day," continued her aunt, "I am confident he would insist upon the course we now urge."

"After having permitted me to refuse the hand of so brave and loyal a cavalier as the Archduke Maximilian," added Juana, "my father would surely not have proposed to me such an alliance as

that of King Richard! Notwithstanding my retirement, I am not ignorant of the crimes of the King of England; his hands still reek with the blood of his nephew, whom he strangled in the tower of London."

"My sister," sternly replied the king, "the general good frequently requires severe laws; and it is a poor return you make King Richard for the great esteem he has for you, to reply to his honorable demands by insulting language."

"When you, my niece, are the queen," added Donna Filipa, "you will be able to form a better opinion of the king from your own observation, and you will acknowledge that reports are greatly exaggerated."

"Ah, woe is me!" said the infanta, "I have not then, the liberty enjoyed by the poorest subject in the realm."

"Ha, my good niece, there you are mistaken; it is you who have abandoned liberty, for the chains and hard rules of a convent life."

"Since, then, you acknowledge that I have really adopted this life, how will it be in my power to break my solemn vows?"

"Our Holy Father the Pope will grant you a dispensation, my sister. Only consent to my request, and leave all the rest to me."

“And remember,” continued the aunt, “that we have much more wisdom than you have. Leave all to our good judgment, and give a willing consent. Your brother, who is also your king, begs you to do a thing which he has the power to command.”

“Yet I will not use my authority, my sister, but I rely upon your good heart and judgment to perform a duty which I so earnestly beseech at your hands.”

“My good brother, I know how much you love me, and I suffer—God alone knows how much—in refusing you.”

“But you must consent. It is absolutely necessary that you consent!”

Juana bowed her head in despair, under the keen, firm look of the king. A moment's silence reigned in their midst. The religious prayed earnestly, and dared not reply. At length, thinking to gain time, she spoke :

“My king and my brother, do not press me, I beseech you. Give me time to pray to God and our Blessed Lady, for light and strength to know and do my duty. To-morrow I shall tell you what heaven inspires me to do.”

This course seemed so reasonable that the king made no objection ; but before leaving the convent

he commanded the abbess to keep Juana alone in her cell, without the opportunity of speaking to any of the community, who might seek to encourage her in what he termed "her obstinacy."

The next day he had armed his heart in advance against the tears and prayers of Juana; but he found her completely changed. She met him with a smiling countenance and sparkling eyes. In joyous tones she exclaimed :

"My brother, I am ready to marry the King of England." Astonished at these words, John could scarcely believe that he heard aright. "If," added the religious, "he is still living."

"Living, my sister ! What do you mean by such a proviso ?"

"Listen," she replied. "Yesterday, when overwhelmed with grief I left you, I threw myself on my knees before a statue of the Blessed Virgin, and besought her to take my virginity under her protection. Doubtless I prayed a long time, for sleep overcame me, and she sent me the following dream : I saw before me a cavalier of majestic appearance ; his arms were covered with dust, and his shield bore the marks of many blows. He raised his visor, and disclosed a face of celestial benignity. 'Dry your tears, princess,' he said ; 'the vow you

have made is too dear to the Mother of God for her to permit it to be broken. Richard is no more. The blood of his nephews has cried to heaven against him, and death has extinguished forever that guilty race. He lies low on the battle-field. I saw his hideous corpse trampled under the hoofs of his enemies' horses.' This vision awakened me ; I was alone in my cell, but I felt that heaven had come to my aid, and for this I thanked Our Lady."

"Very well, my sister ; I shall remember your promise," replied the king, "and I shall call upon you to fulfil it, if, by chance, your dream is not realized by facts."

Eight days later, news came that the great battle of Bosworth had taken place, and that Richard was among the slain.

COAINA,

THE ROSE OF THE ALGONQUINS.

MRS. ANNA H. DORSEY.



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COAINA,

THE ROSE OF THE ALGONQUINS

INTRODUCTION.

WE have no dislike to religious fictions ; but where authentic facts are already too abundant for our limited space, we see no reason to lay aside realities in which divine grace has been the chief agent, and some human heart the real scene of the action, for the sake of suppositions or inventions of the mind, were they ever so pious and interesting.

When the following pages were presented to us by their well-known gifted authoress, we felt delighted with their beautiful diction and their deeply interesting incidents ; still we would not have presented the rich sketch, had it been merely a fine tale. We therefore felt no ordinary gratification, when we received, a few days since, the reply which we subjoin, inclosing four pages of a closely-written letter from our venerable friend, Bishop de Charbonnel, containing, in substance, the whole history of Coaina. But let the illustrious authoress herself introduce, not the story, but the history of her admirable heroine :

WASHINGTON, January 27, 1866.

VERY REV. SIR :

After the time and labor I have expended on Coaina, I have it fully in my power to authenticate its truthfulness, under our

dear Monseigneur de Charbonnel's own hand. Some twenty five or six years ago, this saintly man, then a missionary priest in Canada, came to the Seminary of St. Sulpice, in Baltimore, for the purpose of learning the English language through a regular grammatical course of study. He was a nobleman of rank, and had long before relinquished his title and estates to a younger brother, in France, to become a missionary priest.

I learned this from my venerated old confessor, Father Deluol, who was Superior of St. Sulpice, and who introduced Father Charbonnel to us.

Father Charbonnel was in the habit of coming frequently to our house to converse in English with us, and we considered it a great privilege to entertain him at all times. One evening he brought the little manuscript which I inclose—his *first English composition*—which he read to us with all the pleasure and simplicity of a child, and to which we listened with the deepest interest.

Once launched on the subject of Coana he gave us many interesting particulars of her history, not recorded in his little narrative. I was greatly interested, and promised him that I would at some future day elaborate and make it into a story. I have kept it religiously, partly on account of my promise, partly for the touching facts it relates, and partly as a relic of a saintly friend. Although Father Charbonnel was reticent on that point, I am *very sure* that he was the priest of the mission at the time these events occurred. He would not own to it, but allowed us to infer it. A year or so after he left Baltimore he was made Bishop of Toronto. In the course of a few years he resigned the mitre for the cowl.

In talking of Coana he expatiated on Coana's devotion to

the Blessed Virgin. Probably I have not been happy in bringing out this fact conspicuously, but no one can read the narrative attentively without feeling it. The names of the characters—except Coaina's—are fictitious, and so are some of the trivial incidents and embellishments.

The situation of the mission, the village, the calvary, the description of the people, the account of the "Taho," are all to be found in the "History of the Indian Missions in North America," which has been one of my favorite books for years past.

In writing Coaina, I had one special object in view, besides illustrating the beauty and triumph of religion, and that is to reprove the sins of uncharitableness, slander, and rash judgment, the three sins which crucified Christ. These are the sins of our age. I sometimes wonder, such is the prevalence of these evils among Christians, if true charity has become an obsolete virtue.

Would to God our clergy, and the Catholic press, would make a crusade against the specious, special, universal and—shall I say it—infernal sin of slander, in all its forms. I don't know that I ever found any thing more applicable to this point than the history of Coaina.

Sincerely and truly your friend,

ANNA H. DORSEY

COAINA: THE ROSE OF THE ALGONQUINS.

CHAPTER I.

THE EVE OF THE ASSUMPTION.

NOT far from Montreal lies a beautiful lake, which is formed by the dancing waters of the Ottawa, and surrounded by picturesque hills, which slope in gentle undulations down to its sedgy margin. It is called Canaradago, or the "Lake of the Two Mountains." One of the hills is crowned by a Calvary, which is approached by a rugged, circuitous path, along the sides of which stand, at regular intervals, small rustic chapels, which are much visited by pious pilgrims, and where, during Lent, the congregations of the Mission devoutly perform the "Stations of the Cross," and sing, as they march in solemn procession towards the cross-crowned summit, the sorrows of Mary, the sonorous and mournful chaunt blending, in harmonious accord,

with the penitential season, and the commemorative suggestions of the spot.

Straggling along the shores of the lake and up the slopes, partly hidden by the hills and partly sheltered by the dark primeval forest, which recedes gradually northward, and where the pines and hemlocks ever moan together the sad hymn of the centuries, nestle two Indian villages of a Catholic mission, which diverge to the right and left. The one on the right belongs to a remnant of the once powerful Algonquins; that on the left to a remnant of the Iroquois, who were, in former times, one of the great aboriginal nations of the north; but although such near neighbors, these two people are as distinct in manners and language as they were in the days of Carter and Champlain. These Catholic Indians are the descendants of the fierce savages who tortured the blessed Father Jogues, and martyred, with cruel and prolonged torments the noble and saintly Brebeuf. They live in lodges built of logs and covered with bark, and, during the spring and summer, cultivate their fields and garden patches, where they raise corn, squashes, potatoes, beans, melons and other useful vegetables and fruits; the women, sharing the lighter labors of the men, fish, dress skins and bark, dye the

quills of the porcupine, spin and weave a coarse cloth, embroider the garments, leggings and moc-casins, which they so ingeniously fashion, with beads, tinsel, porcupine quills and fringes; train their children in strict obedience to the rules of the mission, and in the autumn migrate, with their husbands and families, to the hunting grounds of the far northwest.

Devoutly christian as many of these Indians are, and deeming it their greatest earthly privilege to have a resident missionary priest among them to baptize and instruct their children and themselves in the way of salvation, to guide them aright while living and console them when dying, they adhere with tenacity to many of their traditionary habits and customs. On state occasions, they smoke the calumet as a sort of a ratification ceremony, wear proudly the trophies of the chase, cling to their nomadic habits, take a simple pleasure in gew-gaws, feathers, embroidered garments, and, at certain times, do not refrain from painting their faces with vermilion and other rich colors, and are ever ready to engage, with great zest, in their primitive and stirring games. Religion has stripped these children of the forest of none of their simple enjoyments or innocent customs. It has done more

grandly, more divinely; it has transformed them from worshippers of idols to worshippers and adorers of the one true God—from a belief in a false and weird cosmogony, and crude mythological fables and traditions, to a firm belief and enduring faith in the wonderful story of the creation, of the birth of man, of the atonement of Jesus Christ and the divine establishment of His Church upon earth; made them children of that fold which acknowledges ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, and believes in the commandments of Almighty God, and the precepts of His Church. Thus, by an easy transition, it became a strange but devout pleasure to these primitive people, instead of offering sacrifice and libations to the great *Wendigoes* (giants,) to propitiate their favor whenever they engaged in any enterprise of hardship and peril, to invoke the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and ask the assistance of the prayers of the saints; to commend themselves, during their journey through trackless forests, and over rapid rivers, to the guardian care of the angels of God, instead of the elfish *Nee-banaw-baigs* (water spirits,) and the evil *Puk-Wedjies* (pigmies of the woods), to chaunt the plaintive *Miserere* and *De Profundis* as they bear their dead to the fur-lined grave, and implore of the Great

Spirit, for their souls, a "place of refreshment, light and peace," instead of performing the heathenish rites of old, which were practiced at the feast of the dead.

It was amongst this people, who are the fruits of the blossoming of the Canadian wilderness, whose rocky solitudes were moistened by the vivifying dews of the precious blood of Christ's martyrs, that the events which we are about to relate happened somewhere near the year 1838, and if our introduction has been somewhat prosy, it was necessary to a better understanding of the narrative, that it should be written ; therefore, patient reader, if you will accompany me to the chapel of the Algonquin village, which stands on yonder knoll, under the broad shadow of the hemlock and sycamore trees which surround it, I will, without further preface, introduce you to Coaina, the "Rose of the Algonquins," and other personages of our narrative.

Something is in progress in and around the rustic chapel, into which the slanting rays of an August sun fall in trembling showers of gold through the quivering leaves, which indicates an approaching festival. Young Indian lads, with blossom-laden boughs from the forest, with trailing vines bedight with flowers of tropical hues, with baskets of

mosses, with branches of wild roses, with great clusters of golden-rod, asters and the wood anemone, with wicker cages containing birds, with clusters of wild grapes, still clinging in purple richness to the graceful vines, and garlands of ground myrtle, glowing with thousands of coral berries, were grouped here and there around the chapel doors, talking in subdued but cheerful voices, their low converse interrupted now and then by a burst of innocent laughter, which sounded in sweet accord with the rustling of leaves overhead, the wild notes of the caged birds, the drowsy hum of bees, and the distant murmurs of the dancing waters of the lake. The lads peeped now and then into the chapel; they were waiting for some one who was within to come out and receive the floral treasures and offerings they had brought. Meanwhile they took pleasure in observing the beautiful and sacred objects and adornments of the altar, and the shrine of Our Blessed Lady of the forest.

"Look, Joseph," said a little fellow, standing beside a basket which was covered with burdock leaves, "Coaina has unrolled the banner, and is hanging it upon the wall behind the altar. Don't it shine? I've seen the sky look so often when the sun goes down."

"Ugh! that's a grand banner, 'Tony. That's the banner that the ladies of Montreal gave to the mission a long time ago. They worked it with their fingers, and it's full of real gold, pearls and rubies, and was blessed, at the cathedral, by the great chief of the Church, who wears a pointed crown," replied Joseph.

"What's all that upon it, and what does it mean?" asked little 'Tony; "Do you know Joseph?"

"Father Etienne took me into the chapel once, and unrolled the banner and explained it all to me, because I did not miss a single word in my whole catechism," replied Joseph, proudly. "I will tell you, but I don't know whether you'll understand it if I do."

"I'll try," said little 'Tony, humbly.

"Well, you see the eagle feathers, the bear and the arrows and things. That's the *totem*, (coat of arms,) of the three christian tribes. Under that, all in gold—red and yellow gold—with rubies done in so cunningly, are the three council fires, and over all, linked with the rest, you see, by devices of things most prized by our people, is what Father Etienne called the *Monogram* of Jesus Christ." Here both boys bowed their heads and made the sign of the Cross. "You see, 'Tony, that is all

done with gold, and silver, and pearls; but what the word means I don't exactly know, and was ashamed to ask, but I thought maybe it was *His* Holy Name, in characters which I did not understand."

"Thank you, Joseph. Isn't it a great honor to have our totem on the banner with Christ's?" said little 'Tony, naively. "But look, Joseph, at that bright star upon our Blessed Lady's head!"

"Kaw! it is the sunshine!" said a lad standing by. Not irreverently, however, was this said. The boy was only constitutionally matter-of-fact, and could not make a star out of sunshine.

"Sunshine is the light of the Great Spirit, and it *does* look like a star. Anyhow, don't you wish it would stay there, for that's the way I think *she* looks in the land of the Great Spirit," said little 'Tony earnestly.

"Well, yes, I'd like that sunshine to stay there if it could, but it *can't*. I'd let it stay if I could, but I can't either, so it's no use to be wishing. I'd crown her with stars if I could reach high enough to place them, but as I'm not high enough, we'll have to crown our 'white Mother,' (a name by which the Indians of the mission called *her*,) with flowers," said the matter-of-fact lad, moving off.

"See here, Joseph," whispered 'Tony, lifting up the burdock leaves that covered his basket, "will these do for the crown? I found them, under piles of leaves, down in the glen, near the dancing waters. Do you think Coaina will make a garland of them for Our Blessed Lady's head?"

"Oh, 'Tony, how beautiful! where did you find these white violets? I think they must have bloomed on purpose to crown our Mother on the Feast of the Assumption!" exclaimed, in clear, pleasant tones, the voice of a beautiful Indian maiden, who had just left off hanging festoons of flowers around the rustic railing which enclosed the altar, to come in search of fresh mosses for the shrine, and flowers to crown the Tabernacle.

"Oh, yes, Coaina! I think so, too," said little 'Tony, as he lifted his sparkling eyes to her face. "I found them down by the dancing waters, in the glen, under a great pile of leaves. My heart sings like a bird because you love them, Coaina."

"Yes, 'Tony, these are lovely!" said the maiden, lifting the rich, variegated mosses upon which the violets rested. "So like *her*," she murmured, "so fair, yet so lovely; so pure, yet so humble; so holy and modest, yet concealing all, and covering her divine honors with the poor garb of poverty and

seclusion. Yes, 'Tony,' said Coaina, aloud, "these look as if each one had dropped from a star—don't you remember the old legend I told you the other day?—and we will crown Our Blessed Lady with them."

As this is not a fiction which we are relating, having learned the facts we relate, some years ago, from Monsignor De C——, I will describe Coaina, who was not only known by her baptismal name, Coaina (Catharine), but was so beautiful, and so beloved for her great virtues and the sweetness of her disposition, that her people of the mission gave her the soubriquet of *To-hic*—The Rose. As Coaina stood, holding the moss and violets in her hands—the sunlight flickering down through the trembling foliage, sprinkling her from head to foot with glittering spots of gold—she was very beautiful. Her skin was like the pale, amber-colored satin; her forehead low and broad; her nose straight, with thin, expanded nostrils; her mouth, small and exquisitely formed, was rendered more beautiful by the white, even teeth, which the slightest smile revealed; her eyes, full of intelligence and spirit, were softened by long eyelashes, and crowned by brows so evenly arched and black that the old men used to laugh, and call her the "daughter of the two

bows;" the head was exquisitely poised on her slender and graceful neck, and covered with a magnificent suit of glossy black hair, which she wore simply parted, and gathered together in a massive plait, which was coiled around, and fastened to the back of her head with a silver arrow, a present from a schoolmate, while she was at the convent school of Notre Dame, in Montreal.

The crimson blood blushed softly in her cheek, like the sun-tints in a ripe September peach, and her lips were as ruddy as the holly berries that glisten in coral richness amidst the snows of the Canadian forests.

Yes, Coaina was very beautiful, and I am particular in describing her, because her young life was so fully offered to Him who fashioned and formed her wonderful loveliness, and modelled so perfectly on the virtues of *her* whom, from all eternity, He had predestined to be the Mother of His Divine Son.

Coaina was dressed according to the manner of her people. She wore a short skirt of blue and white striped woollen, and a soft doeskin jacket, curiously embroidered with beads. Her moccasins were also cunningly wrought in gay devices, and her leggings of scarlet cloth were finished with a

gay little fringe of feathers at the seam. Yet over all there was such a charm of modesty that, had she been a veiled vestal, the influence of her purity could not have been more felt and acknowledged. Around her neck, suspended by a finely wrought silver chain—the gift of the good sisters of Notre Dame to their pupil—Coaina wore a medal of the Blessed Virgin and a crucifix, which she prized beyond all of her earthly possessions, and which, as she stood in the chapel door, glittered in the sunlight, as, moved by the pulses of her heart, they reposed on her bosom.

“There, Coaina, will these be enough?” cried a lad, throwing open a blanket containing thousands of pine blades, odorous with balms, which were to be spread over the chapel floor.

“Not quite enough,” she replied. “Father Etienne likes the floor well covered, Piquet; you will run back to the pines for more.”

“I *did* want to go to my rabbit snares to see how many rabbits I’ve caught,” said the Indian lad; “all the rest got rabbits yesterday, and I got nothing but a musk-rat.”

“Well, Piquet, if you care more for rabbits than you do for our Mother’s festival, begone!” said Coaina, gravely. “We will get some one else to serve Father Etienne at Mass to-morrow.”

"I *do* care for the rabbits, Coaina, but I won't give up the festival. Redpath's boy and two others have gone into the forest with their bows and arrows, and won't be back until night ; but—but—" and the boy's dusky face flushed, "but I want to do something for our Mother !"

"That's brave, Piquet," said Coaina, laying her hand gently on the black elf locks of the boy's head. "You'll be a great hunter some day. The Great Spirit will bless you, because you have courage to do what is right. Run off now to the pines, and fetch me as many blades as the blanket will hold, and then, Piquet, the day after to-morrow you shall go with me into the forest to hunt." Just then she saw approaching the young chief Tar-ra-hee, the hereditary sachem of her people, and she turned swiftly and resumed her labors in the chapel.

"Winonah, will you fetch in the flowers and mosses which the lads have brought ?" said Coaina to a young Indian girl who was busied about the shrine of our Blessed Lady. The girl came forward with an impatient air, and, although she bore a family resemblance to Coaina—being her cousin—no two persons could have been more unlike. Winonah's eyes were fierce and defiant, with a certain wild yet repellent beauty in them. Her brow

wanted the breadth and serenity of Coaina's, and her handsome mouth wore a proud and scornful expression. Her attire, without being immodest, displayed in its gaudy, flaunting style a vitiated fancy, and a vain, ambitious nature. Trinkets glittered in her ears, on her wrists, and around her slender ankles, while in her black hair she wore jauntily an eagle's feather, the *totem* of her father, who had been one of the great chiefs of their people.

"Why not fetch them yourself, Coaina?" she asked, sharply, "or make the boys bring in the baskets?" At this moment she caught sight of Tar-ra-hee, who lingered still about the chapel door, and suddenly smoothing the frown from her brow, she hastened forward, and, without seeming to observe his presence, began coquetishly to gather in the flowers.

"See, Coaina!" she said, "these asters and crimson berries will make such a lovely wreath for Our Lady."

"I think these will be more beautiful, because they are pure and white like her," said Coaina, gently, as she held up the white violets.

"No, they will not do at all," answered Winonah, to whose intense chagrin the young chief had

moved away without noticing her ; “ I won’t have them ; the crown must be rich in color, and glow around her head like flames of red and gold. Oh, what a crown I will make ! ”

“ What is the dispute, my dear children ? ” inquired a voice which was gentle, but quick and firm in its tones. Both girls started, as, turning, they beheld Father Etienne, who had approached unseen, standing near them. Both knelt, asking his blessing—Coaina with head bowed, Winonah with eyes cast down, but with her head proudly erect.

“ Now, my dear children,” said the good priest of the mission, “ what is the difficulty ? Speak, Winonah, my child ! ” With a flushed cheek, Winonah told him frankly of the difference of opinion between herself and Coaina about the garland, without explaining, however, the secret cause of her jealous and angry interference, and showed him the flowers of her choice, and those of Coaina’s.

“ Make garlands of yours, my child, and festoon the mossy walls of our Blessed Lady’s shrine, they will indeed look rich and brilliant there,” said Father Etienne, gently ; “ but *these* must crown her—these fair and modest flowers, so symbolic of her pure holiness. Yes, Coaina, my child, you are

right—make of them a rare garland, to crown and honor her on the Feast of her Assumption. So far, everything is beautifully arranged—ah—yes—the banner is just in the right place. “See, children, that the floor is well strewn with pine blades,” added Father Etienne, looking around with an air of satisfaction, after which he walked away, blessing the children who were grouped around the chapel, who clung to his hands, and the skirts of his long *soutane*, as long as he would stay.

“Now,” said Winonah, when he was well out of hearing, turning to her cousin with an angry countenance, “as you rule here, tell me what I am to do.”

“Let us help each other, sister,” said Coaina, gently.

“It was my wish to make the wreath for our Mother,” said Winonah.

“You shall make it, Winonah. I was coming to ask you, because I have the tabernacle to dress, and so many other things to do.”

“No ; if I can’t make a fine flaming wreath of the flowers that I like, I shall have nothing to do with it—you can make it yourself, and do the other things beside,” replied Winonah, tossing her proud head.

“As you wish, my sister, only let us have the chapel ready for the morrow,” said Coaina. “Come, children, bring in the flowers and mosses, and let us all work together.” And with good will they all obeyed her directions, for she was the directress of the sanctuary, chosen by the vote of the congregation from among her young companions for the office, on account of her piety, docility, modesty and amiability.

But Winonah had no intention of leaving the decorations of the chapel entirely in the hands of Coaina, to hear on the morrow, from every lip: “Coaina made that!” “Coaina hung those garlands!” “Coaina, and none but she, could have made our chapel so beautiful!” “What would become of us without Coaina to decorate it for the festivals!” and a thousand other expressions of the like character. She had vented her angry spite on her cousin, and now she would, to please her own sinful vanity, take part in the preparations, and only do that portion of the work which was agreeable to herself. In a few moments she was busy twisting vines around the cedar pillars which supported the roof of the chapel; now she climbed lightly to the rafters, and hung the cross-beams with festoons of green, from which were suspended

the scarlet trumpet-flower and wild grapes, until Solomon's Temple, with all its precious carvings, and traceries of fruit and flower, was not more beautiful. Still tripping along the rafters, with the agility and lightness of a bird, she added a cluster of golden-rod here, of the crimson-tinted sumack there, of white *immortelles* here, of wild roses there, weaving in the asters and other flowers with cunning skill among the green leaves and graceful tendrils of the vines, until her task was finished. "Oh, how beautiful! Winonah, how beautiful!" exclaimed Coaina, as turning from the tabernacle, whose decoration she had just completed, she looked up and saw the really charming effect produced by Winonah's taste.

"I am afraid," was Winonah's ungracious reply, "that Father Etienne will not like it, so long as you did not do it."

"Never fear that, my sister," answered Coaina, in the simplicity of her heart; "it is more beautiful than anything I could do."

As the sun declined toward the west, the arrangements for the morrow were nearly completed. The floor was strewn with blades of the odorous pine, every footstep that pressed them distilling a subtle aroma; the altar was a glowing mass of verdure

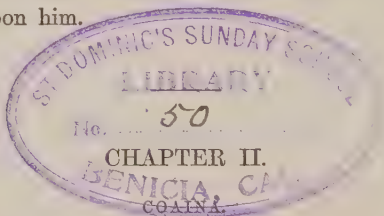
and flowers. Our Lady's grotto had been lined with fresh mosses, a coronal of white violets encircled her brow, and a white lily, found among the sedges of the lake, was placed in her folded hands. The front of the grotto was draped and festooned with vines bearing rich hued flowers, among which, half hidden by the leaves, hung the wicker cages, containing birds, who uttered sweet wild notes of wonder, as they fluttered in their airy prisons, to be captives until to-morrow eve, when the festival would end—then, at the chapel door, amidst the laughter and happy converse of the children of the congregation, Coaina would unfasten the door of each cage and release them, giving them freedom, air, sunshine and their homes far off in the depths of the forest. This joyful little ceremony generally closed the festival days of the mission, and was particularly enjoyed by the young people of the congregation.

But the last glittering rays of the setting sun shoot between a gorge in the hills, and sparkle here and there like sacramental lamps—now upon the jeweled folds of the mission banner, now upon the gilded door of the tabernacle, now upon the burnished head of the crucified Christ, now creeping like a flame along the silver fringe of the altar

cloth. A quiet and solemnity now reign where so short a time before was heard a busy hum. Here and there kneel groups of those who, having completed the preparations for the festival, now examine their consciences for confession. Coaina knelt close beside the shrine of the Blessed Lady, partly concealed by the flower-wreathed pillars near it. Amidst this devout silence, Father Etienne enters with the most Blessed Sacrament, which he deposits in the tabernacle, while every head is bowed low in adoration of that grand and mysterious Presence. He now takes his seat in the confessional, and soon is heard the low whisperings of penitent hearts, as one after another approach the tribunal. Dim shadows, thrown by the purple twilight, steal in at the open door, and with them come the old and young of the mission, walking silently and reverently, wrapped in their toga-like blankets; their dusky, grave faces, and long black hair, hanging loose about their shoulders, their noiseless motions and immobile features adding to the solemn effect and sacred repose of the consecrated place. The women knelt apart from the men, clustering around the shrine of the Blessed Virgin, their little children kneeling beside them, lisping their innocent prayers—all modestly attired, and all devout, save one,

who, tall and shapely, and of a proud, haughty demeanor, knelt in a conspicuous place, where the trinkets in her ears, and the tinselled embroidery of her mantle sparkled brightly in the light of the sanctuary lamp, while her eyes, large and restless, roved critically and inquiringly around her, showing that her heart was but little in unison with the whispered prayers on her lips, as she slipped the beads of her rosary rapidly through her fingers. This was Altoninon, the mother of Winonah, and the aunt of Coaina, whom she had adopted in her orphaned infancy, and reared in her own lodge. Some one in a distant part of the chapel arises to approach the confessional, and when she sees that it is Tar-ra-hee, the young chief, she no longer looks around, but with an expression of satisfaction appears to recollect herself and attend more devoutly to her prayers. Thus it was within the mission chapel, but outside, wrapped in their blankets, stood two forms, their sharp, piercing black eyes scanning the scene within, while an expression of contempt and disgust pervaded their countenances. One was very old, and was named Ma-kee (Knife). He was by descent half Huron, half Algonquin, and had never been baptized, but lived peaceably among the christian Indians of the mission, some of whom

were his near relations. The other was a dissolute, handsome and unbaptized young Iroquois chief, from the neighboring village, called Ahaeek (the Deer), who, having heard a rumor of the preparations, had come down to the Algonquin village to see what was going on, hoping that he should, by some chance, get a glimpse of Coaina, whose beauty and grace had made a profound impression upon him.



THE Festival of the Assumption closed with the singing of the Litany of Loretto by the congregation, the sacred melody being led by the powerful and flute-like voice of Coaina. Swelled to a volume of rich sound, the holy chaunt floated out upon the calm evening air, its solemn echoes lost, in low reverberations, in the shadowy forest. Purple shadows, cast by the mountains, lay upon the lake and shore while the pines and firs along the ridges were fringed with the gold of sunset. Ere long, the inhabitants of the village assembled in a

grove surrounding the great lodge, where the chief men were accustomed to hold council, and debate on any question which arose respecting the interests of their people. The chiefs and the old men, with Father Etienne in their midst, sat around the door of the lodge, placidly smoking, telling traditions of the old fierce wars with the Hurons and Mohawks, going over again the thrilling adventures of their great hunting expeditions to the northwest, or listening to Father Etienne's thrilling narratives of the early French missions in Canada. Old Ma-kee, over whose head the snows of nearly eighty winters had fallen, formed one of the group. Seated upon the grass near Father Etienne, wrapped in his blanket, with his chin upon his breast, he listened. He seldom spoke, for as he declared, "his breast was heavy at the degeneracy of his people, who had become women;" and when he did, it was to scoff at the new creed they had adopted, which he emphatically called the "smoke of foolishness." But the claws and fangs of the old lion were gone; he was harmless, and out of christian charity he was allowed a place of honor among his people, with a comfortable support, in the hope that, ere he died, his pagan darkness would pass away, and he, at least, receive the purifying sacra-

ment of baptism. Ma-kee had great faith in, and respect for, Father Etienne, whom he knew to be a brave as well as a good man; but he did not hesitate to tell him, on occasions, that there was no reason or sense in what he taught, because no man could understand it. And in this the old pagan was no worse than the materialists of this, our day, who reject the mysteries of faith because their human reason cannot reduce them to its own level. Father Etienne was relating the marvellous escape of the French missionaries, nearly two centuries ago, and many of their catechumens, from the house of Saint Mary's, of Ganentää, just when the Onondagoes had conspired with the Mohawks to massacre every soul of them. He described, with great spirit, the ingenuity and courage of the missionaries in effecting their escape, and the speechless amazement of their foes when they found the house so mysteriously abandoned. All listened with profoundest interest, the twinkling of keen black eyes and an occasional grunt of approval expressing their delight. When Father Etienne ceased speaking, old Ma-kee lifted up his head and spoke: "My grandmother," he said slowly, "remembered John Brebeuf. She was a Huron. When he was dying under the torture; when his

fingers and thumbs were cut off; when he was pierced with lighted splinters, torn with scourges and hacked with hatchets, many of the prisoners around him, who had likewise been tortured all night, begged him for baptism. He had no water, none would give him a drop. The day dawned; at sunrise they were all to be put to death. The prisoners begged for baptism; there was not a drop of water. Brebeuf lifted his hands and eyes to the Great Spirit and prayed. Just then, my grandmother, very young at that time, came from the fields with her arms full of maize stalks. The long leaves and tassels were dripping with dew; it hung upon them like rain-drops. He saw it, and asked her for one of the stalks. He spake our language. She had helped to torture him, but she was a woman. She gave him two or three. He grasped them with joy; he bade the prisoners look up; he sprinkled them; he signed the cross in the air over their heads with the maize, and so they were baptized with the dews of heaven and his own blood. I think that was enough. But Brebeuf was a brave man. He died like a warrior; he should have been an Indian, ugh!" Having spoken, the dusky old pagan wrapped his blanket about him, and again dropped his head upon his breast, leaving his

hearers variously affected by his simple and true narrative.

At some little distance from the great lodge, and nearer the lake, were the women, the young people and children of the village, standing or sitting in picturesque groups under the trees and along the shore. Some exercised themselves by running, dancing and leaping; others sought amusement in more quiet ways, while many played simple games with shells and plum-stones, peculiar to their customs. Blithely arose their cheerful voices in pleasant converse and innocent laughter, while each face wore a look of contentment and enjoyment. We said that every face wore a glad expression; that was a mistake, for Altontinon, who sat apart from the rest, gorgeously attired, as usual, looked dissatisfied; but no queen ever wore her royal robes more proudly than she wore her coronal of blue and scarlet feathers, her necklace and earrings of silver beads, and her embroidered scarlet moccasins and mantle. She was the widow of the deceased sachem of her people, and, in default of a son to inherit the dignity and title, had the mortification of seeing it pass to the son of her husband's brother, the present chief, Tar-ra-hee, whose baptismal name was Cyril. Bitterly disappointed, and

obliged to bear, not only her own mortification, but that of her kinsmen, it became a grave consideration how to retrieve the loss. The idea suddenly presented itself to her scheming mind, one day, to marry her daughter, when of a proper age, to Tar-ra-hee. Once admitted, this idea became the ruling motive of her life; she was prepared to sacrifice everything to its accomplishment, and so pledged herself to her kinsmen, who gave it their hearty approval. Altontinon kept up a kind of state around herself, which no one cared to interfere with; for although she was a christian, she was not a saint; in fact, so far from being a saint, she was—I don't know whether there is a name in any Indian dialect for it—but, in plain English, she was a termagant. This woman had taken Coaina, who was left an orphan at a very early age, and nursed her at her breast with her own child, who was, to a day, of the same age. Strange to say, she had loved Coaina, and although she stormed at her now and then, and set her to drudgery that she spared Winonah, she was, upon the whole, kind to her. In the perilous journeys of the tribe to the distant hunting grounds, so full of hardships and privation, she cared as tenderly and constantly for the young Coaina as for Winonah, and ever took the

same pains in teaching her those arts and accomplishments so necessary to the complete training of an Indian girl. Coaina was skilful and expert in them all. She excelled all of her young companions in domestic handicraft ; she was more expert in dressing skins and dying quills and feathers ; more skilful in fishing and hunting ; more agile in running and climbing ; more ingenious in embroidering and fashioning the garments, which she made with such celerity ; and more quick in acquiring knowledge from the books she was permitted to read than any young person in the village. Her school tasks were never neglected ; her religious duties never omitted, and as she grew towards womanhood, there was developed in her character so much purity, virtue and excellence, that she was not only the favorite of the village, but was constantly held up by parents to their children as a model for their imitation. She, unconscious of her superiority, was so modest and affectionate, so generous and cheerful that, with the exception of one, no heart felt malice, envy or ill-will towards her, and that heart was Altontinon's, who had noticed all this with ever-increasing discontent, and whose chagrin was now completed by the fact that Coaina had become far more beautiful than Winonah ; that

she was more intelligent and *more beloved*. Here was a cloud, and from it dropped the very gall and wormwood of bitterness into Altontinon's soul. Then arose the fear or presentiment that the superior attractions of her niece would frustrate all of her plans for her child's union with Tar-ra-hee. Henceforth her jealous misgivings gave her no peace, and on several occasions, when she fancied indications on the part of the young chief of admiration for Coaina, she became almost frenzied with rage. Coaina felt keenly the change in her aunt's conduct towards her, and although her unkindness cost the poor child many a bitter tear, she remained dutiful and patient, bearing all her humors with sweetness and in silence, and sought refuge and consolation only at the feet of MARY, towards whom she had ever cherished the most reverent and tender devotion, by whose life she had modelled her own, and whose gracious assistance she constantly implored. About this time Coaina was placed, by Father Etienne, at the head of the female confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a position which Winonah expected and hoped to receive. This added fuel to the flame in the heart of the mother and daughter, who, by many a sneer, taunt and slight, aroused every in-

dignant emotion in Coaina's nature, and rendered her life almost unendurable.

But as the storms and rains of March vivify and strengthen the roots of the forest trees, so did these tempests of ill-will and malice, which beat so perpetually and harshly against her, strengthen her soul, vivify her faith, and sweeten with eternal fragrance the sweet blossoms of humility that had such deep root in her soul. Then arose another cause of bitter envy and jealousy. On a certain occasion the two girls were permitted to go, with a party of their kinsmen, to Montreal to sell their bead-work and feathers. Father Etienne gave them a letter of introduction to the Superior of the Convent of Notre Dame, who not only received them kindly, but introduced them, at the hour of recreation, to the *religious* of the house, and also to the lady pensioners of the academy. The beauty of the two Indian maidens, the artless grace and modesty of Coaina, the proud mien and wildly bright eyes of Winonah, their excellent French, their low, sweet modulated voices and unsophisticated expressions, won upon every heart. The lady pensioners were half wild with admiration of these beautiful Algonquin princesses, and purchased everything in

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their baskets, besides making them presents of pictures and little ornaments in gold and precious stones, which they took from their own ears and fingers.

Not very long after this visit, Father Etienne received a letter from the lady superioress of this convent, in which she spoke of the visit of Coaina and her cousin, and after expressing the most friendly sentiments towards both, offered to receive Coaina at the academy as a pensioner for six months; at the expiration of which term, she would also receive Winonah for the same period. After due consultation with her friends and kinsmen, it was agreed that Coaina should accept the advantages offered by this kind invitation, and Father Etienne accompanied her, himself, to Montreal. Altontinon would have prevented it, had she dared, but she had made up her mind, that in all that she intended doing to carry out her plans, no agency of hers should be apparent; she was too proud, and prized the position she held too highly, to be willing to lose caste, so she gave a cold assent to Coaina's going, while she fumed in secret, and poisoned still more Winonah's mind against her innocent cousin. She told her, under a sacred

promise of secrecy, all that she designed to do for her advantage, and found in the ambitious girl a willing ally.

Coaina was very happy in Montreal. Every one in the convent loved her, and took great pains in assisting her through her tasks. Quick and appreciative in everything they taught her, above all she showed such a passion for music, and so astonishingly was her talent developed by a little instruction, that she was regarded almost as a prodigy. Her voice was of such surpassing sweetness and compass, so full of a certain *wild life*, that ere long she was permitted to sing in the chapel choir, where, her heart overflowing with the love of Jesus and Mary, she sang the *Salve Regina*, with such sweetness and fervor that the notes soared and floated with thrilling effect above the grand thunder tones of the organ.

When the six months had expired, the good Sisters of Notre Dame would fain have detained her; they were unwilling to lose their beautiful favorite, but she desired to go, that she might take the place of Winonah in her aunt's lodge, and be to her indeed a daughter, in the place of her absent child. So she returned to the "Lake of the Two Mountains," and to her home, the same humble-

mindful, light-hearted, simple child as she left ; and forgetful of the past, she remembered only the debt of gratitude she owed her benefactress, and determined to be more scrupulous than ever in the discharge of the duties she owed her. There was great joy in the village when she came back. Old and young had a pleasant greeting for her ; Father Etienne gave her his blessing with his welcome ; the children brought flowers and birds for her acceptance, and the old pagan Ma-kee lifted up his head and said : "The sunshine has come back to us, and the song of birds. It is good."

Winonah was kindly received at Notre Dame, but having no talent for music, and but little aptitude for study, the little she gained served but to increase her self-conceit and vanity ; and at the expiration of her term, she was full of anger and ingratitude against the good *Religieuses*, because she had failed to learn what they found it impossible to teach her. This, so far from imputing to her own want of capacity, she charged to their indifference. This added fresh zest to the hatred of Altontinon for the innocent Coaina ; but she dared not, as we said before, brave public opinion by open acts of violence to her ; therefore, like the wily, malicious woman she was, she bided her time,

and watched for her opportunity to give crushing effect to her revenge.

Thus matters stood in the village of the "Lake of the Two Mountains," up to the day on which our little narrative opens, and we are happy to say that no more digressions will occur, having put our patient readers in possession of all the necessary facts to enable them to comprehend as mournful a tragedy as was ever written, crowned by as saintly a martyrdom as the world ever knew.

Altontinon sat alone, still watching her daughter, who was sporting with other girls of her age on the margin of the lake, and wondering what had become of the young chief, Tar-ra-hee, whom she had not seen since Vespers. Her keen, restless eyes had been seeking him for the last half hour, but as yet he had not appeared, either among the chief men at the grand lodge, or with the young people on the shore. She became impatient, and was about to rise up from her seat, to walk round in search of him, when some one suddenly approached her, and asked, in a quick, impatient tone: "Altontinon, where is Coaina?"

She started round, and Tar-ra-hee, the young chief, stood before her.

"Is she not with her companions down there by the lake?" she asked.

"I will go and seek her!" he replied.

Now old Ma-kee, walking slowly, approached her and asked: "Where is Coaina?"

"Ask me where your grandmother's ghost is?" she said, sharply. "I do not know where she is."

"Altontinon, your rattles grow finely," replied the pagan, moving on.

"Where is Coaina, my child?" inquired Father Etienne. "I have not seen her since Vespers."

"I have not seen her for more than an hour, my father. Perhaps she is in the chapel," she replied, more respectfully. He went away. Group after group of young people approached, one after the other, all making the same, inquiry.

"We are waiting for her to begin blind man's buff," said one.

"We are waiting for her, to dance. Tar-ra-hee is asking for her," said another.

"We want her to sing for us?" said the children.

"We can't get along without Coaina!" cried one.

"Everybody wants her! where is she?" screamed another.

Almost beside herself with fury, Altontinon, who restrained herself with difficulty, professed to be entirely ignorant of the whereabouts of Coaina, and she was finally left alone, but not long ; for presently little Tony straggled up and asked the so oft-repeated question : " Where is Coaina ? " and received for answer a rousing slap, full on the side of his tawny cheek, which sent him roaring away. Soon after, Tar-ra-hee came back, his gay feathers nodding over his head, his silver ornaments, and a gold medal sent him by the English queen, glittering in the last glimmer of sunset—so full of life and courage, so graceful and noble in his bearing that, for an instant, Altontinon was lost in admiration ; but his words recalled her to her own train of thought, and again plunged her into the abyss of her own malicious intentions, for he asked if she had yet seen Coaina.

" I have not seen her ; can't the stars shine without Coaina ? can't the wind blow ? " she answered, in suppressed rage.

" No, the stars do not shine for me when Coaina is away," replied the young chief, with a proud nod. " It grows always dark."

" Coaina no longer heeds me ; she is beginning to have lovers. Ahdeek, the Iroquois, has been

around my lodge lately. Perhaps if you can find him, Coaina will not be far off," said Altontinon.

The young chief started and turned upon his heel, stung sharply, but too proud to question his tormentor. Altontinon thought, "he will now seek Winonah," and watched eagerly to see if he went towards her, but he strode off in quite another direction, and she lost sight of him.

Tar-ra-hee wandered listlessly and moodily on, heedless of whither he was going, when he suddenly halted and bent his head in a listening attitude; then a gleam of joy lit up his swarthy features. He was within a short distance of Altontinon's lodge, and had heard Coaina's voice singing, in low sweet tones, one of the hymns of the mission. He sprang forward, and swiftly made his way thither. It was, indeed, Coaina, seated at the door of the lodge, with the soft moonlight falling upon her upraised face. She heard advancing footsteps; the next moment Tar-ra-hee stood beside her. A deep blush crimsoned her cheeks; she arose and saluted him, with downcast eyes.

"I have come for you, Coaina. Your companions await you on the shores of the lake. Come!" he said.

"Did my aunt send for me?" she asked.

"No."

"I cannot come : do not wait."

"I will wait. You shall come !" he said quickly.

"Cyril!" exclaimed Coaina, who always called him by his christian name.

"Forgive me, Coaina ; come !" he pleaded.

"No ; I cannot go. You must return to them.

"I shall stay here," he said, in a determined tone.

"Don't—don't ! you must go away !" she said, earnestly.

"I *must* go away !" he said, angrily. "Do you send others away ? Why must I go ?"

"Ah, Cyril, go, and do not be angry, my friend," she said, while big tears rolled over her cheeks. "I have something to do—a duty which I must not neglect—and should you stay away and be found here with me ! ah, Cyril, don't you see how ill it would look ?"

"Listen, Coaina," said the young chief, gravely ; "I will obey you now, but give ear to my words, and open your heart to take them in. My lodge is empty, and before another moon I will rise up in the council, and ask for you to be my wife."

A soft blush suffused Coaina's lovely face, and a dreamy smile chased the tears from her eyes, but

she only said : " Go, now, Cyril, my brother ; leave me."

" I go, Coaina," but when the moon rises to the height of yonder red star," he said, pointing to one overhead, " you will hear my flute not far off from the lodge ; will you listen to what it tells, Coaina ?"

" I will listen, my brother," she promised. Then he turned, and moving swiftly away, was lost among the shadows of the night.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHADOWS OF THE STORM.

THE exultant gleam faded from Altontinon's eyes, for no sooner had Tar-ra-hee left her than she felt that her anger had got the better of her craft ; and if she wished to succeed in her wicked designs, it was a most impolitic way to begin by offending him.

On that very day she had inaugurated her malicious work. She had positively forbidden Coaina to leave the lodge that evening, and had uttered a slander against her to Tar-ra-hee, by coupling her name with that of Aldeek, the Iroquois, which she

was crafty enough to know would, at some time or other, help to serve her purpose. She watched his retreating figure, satisfied that at least she had prevented him from seeing Coaina that evening; but when she saw, in the distance, that he turned into a lane of cedars which led to her own lodge, her baffled rage almost suffocated her. "He would see Coaina," she thought; "he will find out that her absence from the innocent enjoyments of the evening was compulsory, and having discovered this, would suspect *her*, and give no credit, henceforth, to anything she might assert to Coaina's injury."

The longer she sat there brooding over the failure of this, her first steps towards the accomplishment of her ambitious scheme, the more intense grew her hatred, and forgetting that All-Seeing Eye, before which the profoundest secrets of the soul are nakedly unveiled, forgetting all the divine teachings and claim of religion, forgetting death and the judgment, she vowed, with a bitter curse, that she would succeed in what she had undertaken, even if Coaina's reputation and life be the sacrifice.

But her guilty fears were somewhat lulled to rest when, later in the evening, she again saw Tar-ra-hee among the young folks, and observed that he

showed much attention to Winonah, who exerted all of her coquettish wiles and arts to charm him.

The moon had arisen, full and unclouded, over the mountain, and everything glistened in her rays as if frosted with silver. The festival was over, and the people were returning to their peaceful homes.

Altóntinon, well pleased at the notice bestowed upon her daughter by the young Algonquin chief, walked slowly homeward, full of thought concerning the advantages of a marriage between them. Winonah tripped along lightly over the dewy turf, a little in advance of her mother, whose eyes watched lovingly the gracefully moving form, whose every motion threw out sparkles and flashes from the spangles and gold fringes which adorned her tunic and moccasins. How she loved the girl, but how savage and pagan was the love which gave birth to sins which would incur the displeasure of God, and wound afresh the tender hearts of Jesus and Mary. It is said that when a soul voluntarily seeks *evil*, the prince of evil is ever ready with opportunities to serve its purpose, and so it seemed to be on this occasion.

Among the Iroquois who lived in the adjoining village, there were some few who, rejecting Christ,

preserved their own heathenish traditions, clung to the ancient customs of their ancestors, and, it was whispered, practiced in secret their idolatrous rites. But as they were peaceable, and observed all the civic rules of the mission, and interfered in no way with their christian kinsmen or people, their presence was tolerated, in the pious hope that, after a season, they might be induced to follow their example. Among these was their hereditary chief, Ahdeck, (Reindeer,) who had often distinguished himself in their great hunting expeditions, and excelled in all those accomplishments most highly prized and appreciated by the Indians. Ahdeck was handsome, vain, passionate, and it was said that he was dissolute in his habits. He had frequently seen Coaina, and had, in various ways, endeavored to win a smile from her, by expressing his admiration by signs, gifts and words; but she had invariably repulsed every advance he had made, and turned from him with a frown of displeasure whenever he ventured to approach her; but all this only incited him to more persevering efforts to win her.

On the evening of the festival he had strolled down towards Altontinon's lodge, with scarcely a purpose except to be near the home of Coaina, for

he supposed her to be absent at the festival, when, to his great joy, he saw her standing in the moonlight, leaning against the moss-covered stile that led to the lodge. She was reciting the rosary, her eyes fixed on the cloudless heavens, and thinking that, as the moon was throned in glittering beauty among the luminous stars, so was the Blessed Virgin throned in heaven, and surrounded by the glorious angels, whose queen she is. It was a consoling and beautiful thought, and as they twinkled and trembled in dewy splendor, flashing out rays of crimson, blue and gold, Coaina almost imagined that she saw the flutter of their glorious wings as they bowed before their queen.

“Left all alone, like a wild pigeon in the empty nest! I am glad to see you, Coaina,” said the audacious Iroquois, who had approached her unseen and unheard.

“Ahdeek!” exclaimed Coaina, starting; “I wish you well, but you must go away this instant. I am all alone.”

“That is good; now I can *say* to you, face to face, what you are blind and deaf to in signs. I love you.”

“Esa! Esa! shame on you! Ahdeek, leave me!” she cried.

"I will become a christian, Coaina, if you will hear me!" he plead.

"To become a christian will be a glorious thing, Ahdeek! but go; Father Etienne will instruct and baptize you."

"No; I learn the christian creed from you or none. I thought you christians would give your life to save a soul."

"So would I lose mine to save your soul, Ahdeek, but I shall never enter your lodge; I can never be more to you than a friend. I will pray for you. You must now go away," and Coaina turned from him and swiftly entered the lodge, while he, baffled and angry, strode off, almost knocking Altontinon down, he came so suddenly against her. She, as keen-eyed as a vulture, had seen him, as she approached her lodge, talking with Coaina. At first she thought it was Tar-ra-hee standing at the stile, but when she discovered it was Ahdeek, the Iroquois, she said: "Aha! yes!" and rejoiced in her wicked heart, because she knew that his having been there would help her evil plans; then asking Ahdeck if "he kept his eyes in his pocket that he might run people down in his path," she went into her dwelling, and calling Coaina, assailed her with the most violent abuses; affecting to believe that

she had received the Iroquois as her lover in her absence, she uttered the most injurious insinuations, nor would she listen to Coaina's explanations, but pretended to be outraged and grieved and horrified at her conduct, called her a hypocrite, and finally struck her in the face.

Almost stunned by the injustice and violence of her aunt's conduct, Coaina, without attempting to speak another word in her own defense, withdrew to her own little apartment, and dropping the curtain of skins which separated it from the rest of the lodge, she threw herself prostrate upon the floor before the blessed images of Jesus and Mary—of Jesus, in His bloody coronal of thorns—of Mary, of the seven dolours. She watered the floor with her tears ; she offered her griefs to them, and finally found consolation in the generous resolve she made to suffer patiently all the unmerited reproaches she had received, for them who had suffered so willingly ten thousand more infinite and bitter griefs for her.

At last, her head resting upon her arm, she fell asleep, and was refreshed by the dreams of innocence. Once only did she awake. She had dreamed of her dead mother, as she sometimes did, and thought she was singing a soft lullaby to

her, whose strange, unearthly melody thrilled through her heart, and awoke her. At first, she did not know whether she was awake or still dreaming, for she heard, while the whippowil sent his lamentations abroad through the forest, and the screech owl answered in shrill vibrations, the sweet wild notes of a flute, breathing assurances of a pure affection. Then she remembered Tar-ra-hee's promise, and while a soft glow stole over her tear-stained face, she commended herself to the protection of the Blessed Virgin and fell asleep.

Like a fair prairie blossom agitated by the morning winds, and scattering, in prodigal brightness, the dew-drops from its rich petals, so Coaina threw off the sense of ill which oppressed her when she first awoke. The first red beams of the newly-risen sun shone through the vines that partially shaded her window, and bathed in light the sacred images of Jesus and Mary, which stood upon a little shelf at the foot of her bed. "My Holy Mother and Advocate," she murmured, folding her long, tapering hands together as she knelt before them, "look at thy divine Son, and obtain for me a patience like unto thine."

Her simple toilet was soon made, and hurrying out to the chapel she knelt in her favorite place.

close beside the altar of the Blessed Lady, and assisted at Mass with the greatest devotion. Between the sweet and glorious mystery of the altar and the benign presence of Mary, Coaina's whole being reposed, as in a safe haven, secure from the rude storms that threatened her.

Tar-ra-hee served Father Etienne at the altar that morning, as he was frequently in the habit of doing, and it was a touching sight to see this noble young savage bowing in such sweet subjection to Christ ; to see his strong arms folded in meek and childlike devotion ; his proud, handsome head bowed, in unquestioning faith, before the Lord of lords, whom he received humbly and reverently under the form of Bread.

For several days nothing occurred to interrupt the tranquillity of the Village of the Lake. Alton-
tinon behaved to Coaina with a certain grave displeasure, and when she addressed her, spoke in a tone so harsh and sneering that she was deeply pained ; but feeling innocent of offense and guiltless of crime, she omitted none of her duties, and persevered in all her accustomed attentions to her aunt and cousin, hoping, by patience to overcome evil, and by prayer to turn their hearts forgivingly towards her. She observed that Altontinon had

many and long secret conferences with several of her kinsmen and friends, and was surprised, once or twice, to see her in close conversation with Ah-deek, the Iroquois.

Tar-ra-hee had not approached her since the night of the Festival of the Assumption; she only heard his flute, now and then, under the trees around the lodge, and except that Father Etienne and her friends around the village greeted her as kind as ever, and the little children gathered about her and hung upon her skirts whenever she appeared among them, she would have indeed felt friendless.

The clouds were gathering around her, and their shadows were discerned by her delicate and sensitive perceptions; she knew not whence they were coming, or in what storms they would burst; she trembled with the chill that often swept over her; she felt that no mortal could help her in this mysterious coming woe; but the darker grew her dread, the closer she clung to the shelter of the sanctuary, the oftener she fortified her soul with the divine sacraments, and with more constant fervor did she kneel at the feet of Mary, imploring her gracious protection.

But one day the clouds seemed suddenly to dis-

perse, and again streamed the sunshine into Coaina's heart. Father Etienne walked into Altontinon's lodge while herself and daughter were partaking of their evening meal, and Coaina, who was no longer permitted to eat at the same board with them, sat apart, busily engaged upon a piece of needle-work. Each one arose to welcome him ; he returned their salutations with a cheerful air, and taking the chair placed for him, he drew it to the side of Coaina, and sat down. Altontinon's guilty heart was agitated by this unexpected visit ; but when the good priest announced the object of it, she felt as if a bolt of ice had suddenly fallen upon it. "I have not only brought you my blessing to-day, my good children," he said, "but also most excellent tidings. This morning, while the assembly were in council, deliberating about the sale of some lands on the St. Lawrence, which they finally decided not to sell, Tar-ra-hée stood up and declared his intention to make our child here, Coaina, his wife, and asked the consent and approval of all present, including myself. There was not a single voice raised in dissent against it ; in fact, there was a murmur of satisfaction very audible, for we all knew, Altontinon, how precious is To-hic to her people. They are all proud of their 'rose,' and

each one felt that the young chief's choice of a bride was not only a wise one, but a special pleasure to each individual present. When I was called upon for an opinion—sit still, Coaina—I not only hastily approved of Tar-ra-hee's choice, but assured him, before all present, that in such a union he would find all the good and happiness that, humanly speaking, one could expect; after which," continued Father Etienne, laying his hand gently upon Coaina's bowed head, "the assembly ratified its solemn approval and formal consent, and I hurried here to be the first to bring the joyful news to your aunt, and give my blessing to the betrothed of the good and brave Tar-ra-hee."

"Thank you, my father, for your goodness," she said gently, and without lifting her modestly down-cast eyes; "Cyril is generous, but it is best, my father, not to hope for too much. I have sometimes seen," she said, lifting her great soft eyes, and looking before her with a strange, far-off expression, "the day which rose the brightest close in wild, wintry tempests."

"Coaina, my child, these are dreams. It is the christian's duty to receive with joy and gratitude whatever good our Father sends, without throwing a veil of cloud and doubt over His gifts," said Fa-

ther Etienne, cheerfully ; but many and many a time since has he remembered her looks and words that day.

“ I will try, my father, to be grateful—to be dutiful ; but there’s something,” she said, passing her hand over her forehead and eyes, “ there’s something like a mist—I don’t know what it is, but it seems to shut out the sunshine.”

“ Coaina,” said the good father, “ if you were a pale-face, I should say you have the *vapors*. You have been keeping in-doors too much of late, and stooping too long at a time over this everlasting bead work and stitching. Altontinon, see to it, or we shall have a burial instead of a bridal.”

“ I will see to it, my Father,” replied Altontinon, with a double meaning ; then dissembling with a self-possession worthy of a better cause, she rallied Coaina while she congratulated her, and pretended to be highly delighted at the alliance. “ Leave her with me, my father,” she continued, “ she is only coy—you know how modest Coaina is—she has to think a little while—where a girl has two or three lovers, it is difficult to decide all at once——”

“ My father,” said Coaina, in response to Father Etienne’s look of inquiry, “ I have no lover—that is, I shall be the wife of Cyril, or none. He is all

that I could ask or desire." Coaina knew that her aunt meant mischief by this hint, and that she referred to Ahdeek, the Iroquois ; she therefore answered as she did, with a slight hesitation, because she remembered that Ahdeek had presumed to call himself her lover ; and such was the tender and sacred regard which this young Algonquin maid had for the truth, that she would not fully deny her aunt's statement, lest she should thereby offend the truth.

" Well, well, my child, cheer up ! You have a happy future ahead. Altontinon, hurry the wedding preparations, for I am sure Tar-ra-hee will not desire a very long delay," and Father Etienne, giving but little thought *then* to what had passed during the interview, hurried up to the Iroquois village to one or two sick persons who needed his ministrations.

The news flew through both villages, in an incredibly short time, that Tar-ra-hee had chosen the Rose of the Algonquins for his bride. Coaina received the hearty congratulations of old and young, of friend and foe, until she, to escape their friendly jests, and the incessantly repeated good wishes of those who constantly crowded to see her, generally slipped away from them, and by a back path found

her way to the chapel, to offer her newly-found happiness to the Blessed Virgin, and hide her modest blushes in the shadow of the sanctuary. We spoke of Coaina's "friends and foes." It is marvellous that so pure and lovely a nature should have a foe ; but alas ! it is a world old story how virtue ever excites malice ; beauty, envy ; prosperity, covetousness ; and felicity, hatred and ill-will ; so, after all, it is not strange that our Rose of the Algonquins had her enemies who, to conceal their plans for her ruin, assumed the guise of friendship, and were loud in their protestations of delight at her good fortune.

Never was happiness and prosperity borne with greater modesty. The cloud that had shadowed her heart seemed to have passed away. Altontinon and her cousin were more kind, and the strong, protecting love of her betrothed, gave her a feeling of tranquil happiness. No duty was left neglected ; no kindness left undone ; no pleasure or assistance that she could afford was withheld. Skilled, as we said before, in hunting and fishing, she brought the choicest dainties of the lake and forest to her aunt's lodge, and so deftly did she perform all her tasks, so important had she become to Altontinon's comfort and Winonah's whims, that her aunt began to

feel what a terrible loss Coaina would be to her. This was another incentive to her to carry out her selfish and malicious plots against the guileless maid, for whose approaching marriage the most splendid preparations known to these primitive people were in progress.

CHAPTER IV.

“BEWARE OF THE SNAKE, TO-HIC.”

It is well for the reader of this narrative to keep this fact in view: that had the young chief of the Algonquins united himself in marriage with Wino-nah, it would have increased the dignity and consequence of her mother's family, as it would have secured to them the chieftainship and grand *totem* of the tribe. Bitterly disappointed in their ambitions and selfish aspirations, angry and disturbed in mind, they were prepared to unite with Alton-tinon in any plan she might suggest to them to break off a marriage so disastrous to their schemes of arrogance and pride. It seems strange to associate the vices of civilization with the characters of

an Indian story ; but believe me, friends, that human nature, unless wonderfully dignified and hallowed by grace, is the same latent savage everywhere, which only requires circumstances, in a greater or less degree, to rouse him from his lair in the heart to seek his greed or revenge. Let us not, then, be too much surprised, however much we may feel grieved at the depravity of these disappointed people, or deem incredible the events which follow. It was not long before whispers began to float about to the injury of Coaina, which at first only excited a scornful expression of denial from her friends. She, all unsuspecting of the plots against her happiness, was as blithe as a bird, wondering often, in her sweet humility, why she should be so blessed ! Her eyes, like a young doe's, grew softer and more luminous, and her voice, ever trilling in sweet cadences, like the wild birds of the forest, became more low and gentle, and was only heard when her full heart sought to give expression to her grateful happiness, singing the beautiful litanies and touching hymns of the mission.

Not the least rejoiced of all her friends was old Ma-kee, the unbaptized, who would sit watching her—often in her aunt's lodge ; sometimes on the shore ; sometimes at the door of the chapel, while

she adorned the shrine of the Lady with flowers—his withered face wearing a grave and pleased expression, and only breaking the silence to take his pipe from his mouth, and say: “Ugh! it is good!” The affection of this old pagan for Coaina, I have sometimes thought, in connection with her sad story, was a grace bestowed upon him for that act of charity showed by his grandmother to the martyr Brebeuf!

Of those most enraged at Coaina’s approaching marriage, was Ahdeek, the Iroquois, who found a ready sympathizer in Altontinon, and readily enlisted in the service to aid in the accomplishment of that which would finally throw Coaina, helpless and defenceless, in his power. He was now frequently seen at Altontinon’s lodge. This was not agreeable to Tar-ra-hee, who, without suspecting any designs against his betrothed, nevertheless so despised the low vices of Ahdeek, that he could not bear to know the air she breathed was contaminated with his presence, and desired her to hold no intercourse with him, but leave the lodge whenever he came into it, which she invariably did.

Day after day rolled on, and the month of the falling leaves had come. The frosts had tinted the leaves with the most gorgeous hues of crimson and

orange, which, blending with green and russet, and relieved by the rich evergreens of cedar, pine and hemlock, gave to the forests the appearance of a grand *parterre*. Nature seemed to be preparing her robes for a grand festival, instead of a burial. There is something sublime in this glorious passing away of summer, as if in thus gathering about her departure a splendor symbolic of a glad obedience to the law of the great Creator, she offers a holocaust of precious adoration, and crowned with a silvery nimbus, expires like a blood-stained martyr, full of the joyful hope of a resurrection to come. Taking their lessons from the dying year, it is not strange that the Indians, in the primitive days, should have chanted their death-song, when life was passing, their eyes fixed in hope on the setting sun, whose radiance, they believed, illuminated the pathway to the hunting grounds of the Great Spirit.

The Indians of the mission of the Lake of the Two Mountains, were preparing for two great events—one was the marriage of their chief, which Father Etienne desired should be celebrated with great solemnity, not only to impress upon his people the dignity of the sacrament, but to offer to Tar-ra-hee and Coaina a tribute of respect, which

he considered them eminently worthy of; the other was the annual migration of the tribe to the hunting grounds of the Northwest.

The young ladies of Montreal, who had known and loved Coaina at the Convent of Notre Dame, sent her a magnificent bridal present of a dress of blue velvet, made in the style of the picturesque attire she wore when they first saw her, embroidered with silver, and a veil of blue crape covered with spangles. They knew her singular devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and thought, justly, that the present would be more acceptable if composed of *her* colors. In the same box, neatly packed, and directed to their beloved pupil, was a wreath—made by the nuns, with the permission and approval of their superior—composed of delicately tinted feather flowers, among which were woven clusters of Roman pearls. Directed to Father Etienne's care, he no sooner opened the box than he sent for Coaina, to whom he presented them with genuine pleasure.

"My father," said Coaina, looking upon the costly presents spread out before her, "these are very rich and beautiful! They are too fine for me. I should be ashamed to wear them. I have prepared a more simple and befitting attire."

“Coaina, my child, these things must be worn, according to the intention which prompted the gifts. You cannot refuse to do so without appearing proud and ungrateful, which you *are not*. If I thought they would give birth in your heart to one single throb of vanity, I should at once advise you to burn them up. But wear them, my child—it will please your good friends in Montreal; it will please Tar-ra-hee and your people to see you splendidly dressed on your wedding day. After that, you can wear them for penance, if you choose,” said Father Etienne, laughing. “Now take them home, my child.”

“Yes, my father; but something has happened—I am troubled—may I speak to you?” said Coaina.

“Yes—yes. But, my child, what is the meaning of all this? I confess that you perplex me!” said Father Etienne, perceiving, as he looked up, that Coaina’s eyes were full of tears. “What is the trouble?”

“There is something, I do not understand *what*,” she said, timidly, “that causes some, who were formerly my best friends, to curl their lips at me as they pass; they have no greeting for me when I salute them, but look me full in the face, and, with a toss of the head, turn away.”

“Tut! tut! my good child! I fear that it is a little envy on *their* part, and a little imagination on *yours*. Did you never hear, Coaina, that when one is about to marry, all one’s faults are trumped up and magnified, and when one dies, all of one’s virtues are only remembered. So don’t give yourself unnecessary trouble about one’s looks. Looks can’t hurt one. So that your conscience is clear, and each duty performed with a view to the approval of Almighty God, why should you be disturbed? Go home, my child, assured that *she* who is the ‘Help of Christians’ will be your refuge and protection.”

“That is my hope!” she replied, with a smile that irradiated her countenance—“that is my hope!” Then, kneeling, she received Father Etienne’s blessing, and went away loaded with the rich gifts which she was to wear at a supreme moment, but not as a bride. She had never hinted to Father Etienne anything relative to the unkind treatment which she had for a long time received from her aunt and Winonah, because she not only feared to wound charity thereby, but believed, in her humility, that all she suffered was due to her unworthiness; nor had she ever referred to her annoyances about Ahdeek to him, not caring to

trouble him about trifles ; and in fact, although the effect of these annoyances was so disagreeable and serious a matter to her, there was scarcely anything tangible or grave enough in them to justify an appeal to Father Etienne ; he was, therefore, at that time, entirely ignorant of all the undercurrent of deceit and wickedness that was going on, to the prejudice of Coaina. Altontinon and Winonah approached the sacraments regularly. Alas ! yes ; they dared to approach the august feast of the altar, as Judas did ; they dared invite Jesus Christ into their hearts, which were the abode of devils ; they dared again to crucify Him by their malice towards His faithful servant, who, in return, prayed for them night and day, and frequently offered her worthy communions for their temporal and spiritual good.

One evening, Coaina, having remained later than usual in the chapel, where she had received much consolation in prayer, returned home, and found her aunt and Winonah in raptures over a superb mantle of mole-skins, fringed richly with gold, and lined with cloth. Coaina had never seen anything which struck her as being so magnificent, in her life, and she expressed her admiration with simple earnestness, without once inquiring to

whom it belonged. If she thought about it at all, her idea was that it belonged to her aunt. What, then, was her surprise when Altontinon threw it over her shoulders, saying: "Tar-ra-hee knows how to make princely gifts to his bride. The Queen of England might be proud of this."

"Oh, how I wish I were you, Coaina!" exclaimed Winonah, clasping her hands.

"For me! Oh, it is too grand, too costly for me! When was Tar-ra-hee here?"

"This afternoon, while you were at the chapel. He will not be back until to-morrow evening. He has gone, in his canoe, to fish, up the Ottawa, and the word he left is that you meet him on the shore when he returns, with his gift, this superb mantle, about you," said Altontinon.

"How foolish is Tar-ra-hee to have me make a show of myself," she said, with a low laugh, as she smoothed the velvety fur with her small dusky hand. "I shall, however, do as he wishes; really I am ashamed of such grand finery."

"It is not too fine for the bride of our sachem, Coaina! Why, gold, and silver, and precious stones, would not be too grand for *you*! But what have you got there?" said Winonah.

“Something which I will show you by and by,” replied Coaina, who had felt Winonah’s sneer, and then, gathering up the mole-skin mantle with the other things which she held in her arms, she retired to her own apartment. Then Altontinon and Winonah embraced each other, laughed and danced as if they were wild, and making other signs expressive of triumph, pointed towards Coaina’s apartment with fiendish glee.

The next evening Coaina folded the mole-skin mantle and hung it upon her arm, then threw a gray cloak about her in such a manner as to conceal its gold fringes and scarlet lining, and was about leaving the lodge to go down to the lake to wait for Tar-ra-hee, when her aunt accosted her with a discomposed look.

“Where are you going, Coaina?”

“To wait for Cyril, as he left word,” she mildly answered.

“Oh! But where is the mantle? He was very particular in his wish for you to wear it,” said her aunt, anxiously.

“I have it here,” replied the unsuspecting girl, as she lifted her cloak, that Altontinon might see it. “I could not wear it through the village with-

out exciting too much observation, so I thought I would put it about me after I got down to the lake."

"Such modesty!" said Altontinon, scornfully. "Little hypocrite, leave off that gray cloak this instant, and wear Tar-ra-hee's gift, as he bade you. He shall not be dishonored by having his wishes, as well as his bridal present, slighted in that way. Shame upon you." Then Altontinon snatched the grey cloak from Coaina's shoulders, shook out the superb mole-skin mantle, and before Coaina, in her surprise, could offer the slightest resistance, she had put it around her, and fastened the showy gilt clasps over her bosom. "Now go," she added, "you are too poor-spirited to be the wife of our chief."

What was it that, like a strain of clear music, suddenly whispered to Coaina's heart: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven?*" She could not tell, but, repeating the words to herself, she walked from the lodge, forgetful of all else, while her eyes wore that same far-off expression which we have before described. She did not see the scornful looks directed towards her, or the low-uttered sneers as she passed the various groups collected in front of the lodges in the village, on

her way to the lake ; still less would she have understood them even had she seen them.

The soft music of the waves rushing swiftly to the shore, and melting upon the sands—the cool, crisp wind, and the broad track of gold and crimson light thrown across the lake by the declining sun, roused Coaina from her far-off dreams, or rather from her introverted communings ; and, selecting a sheltered seat upon the gnarled roots of an ancient maple, whose branches, laden with scarlet leaves, leaned down and partially swept the surface of the lake, she folded her hands upon her knees, and awaited the coming of Tar-ra-hee. At length, afar off, and in the very midst of the sun's golden track, his canoe appeared upon the dancing waters ; nearer and nearer it sped like an arrow, under the sinewy strength of the young chief's arms. Coaina could now see the paddles flashing in and out of the water, looking as if they were plated with burnished gold ; then they were drawn in, and Tar-ra-hee stood up, his symmetrical form showing in noble relief against the bright sky ; his eye swept the shore ; Coaina waved a bright scarf with which she had covered her head ; he made a glad gesture with his hands, again resumed his seat, and by a

few vigorous strokes of the paddles brought his birchen canoe gliding swiftly up upon the sands. Securing some of the finest and largest of his fish, he sprang upon the shore and hastened towards Coaina, who, with a smile of welcome, modestly advanced to meet him, when he suddenly halted—his face flushed crimson, and an angry scowl darkened his features.

“Cyril!” said Coaina, timidly.

“Thou art fine to-day, Coaina, too fine for the bride of an Algonquin christian,” he said, scanning her for a moment with grave scorn, from head to foot, then passed on with quick, angry step. Here was sudden darkness for Coaina! His own gift, worn at his own command to show her value for it, to excite such cruel anger! It was a mystery which was inexplicable to her. Tears gathered in her eyes, her hands trembled, and she was obliged to sit down while she tried to unclasp the mantle. Bewildered and grieved, she returned slowly homeward, the mantle hanging upon her arm, and when she was once more within the solitude of her own little apartment, she tossed it into an obscure corner, and, with a feeling of desolation, knelt, weeping and sorrowful, to lay her griefs where she had ever offered her joys, at the feet of Jesus and Mary

By and by she grew more composed, and began to hope for the best. Guileless herself, she suspected no evil in others—far less did she imagine the existence of any base designs against her. After a while Altontinon came in under pretence of borrowing a needle, and asked : “ Did Tar-ra-hee come ? ”

“ Yes, he came,” replied Coaina.

“ Were you there in time to see him ? ”

“ I saw him.”

“ How did he think his bride looked in that royal mantle ? ” asked Altontinon, with an evil glitter in her eyes.

“ I believe he thought it, after all, too fine,” she said, looking down.

“ The unreasonable ! But, child, it was no use to cry about *that*. Tar-ra-hee is only like all other men—none are constant,” said Altontinon, with a sneer.

“ I think that Cyril is. Nothing can shake my faith in him. We must not judge him rashly,” said Coaina, gravely.

“ I won’t dispute the point with you. Settle it yourself. But did you hear that there’s great sickness among the Iroquois ? ”

“ No. Poor people ! What is it ? ”

“ A sort of dreadful fever. Father Etienne has

gone up there to baptize some of them who are dying. It is worse up near the forest, where the unbaptized ones live."

"Ah, may God bring them safely into His fold before their departure!" exclaimed Coaina, forgetful of her own sorrow, as she thought of the needs of the dying.

"And," continued Altontinon, "that filthy pagan, Ahdeek, has been here blubbering like a woman, and looking like a scare-crow, because his mother is ill and won't let the medicine man come in to her. Then he told me to ask you to talk to the WHITE MOTHER for her."

"I will, most gladly," said Coaina, who was only too happy to be engaged in a work of charity. Then she bathed her face, and wrapping her gray cloak about her once more, started to go down to the chapel to pray for the sick, and particularly implore the assistance of the Blessed Virgin for the conversion of Ahdeek's dying mother. Near the chapel she met old Ma-kee, who stopped her to inquire where Tar-ra-hee was.

"At his lodge, I suppose, Ma-kee. He has just returned from fishing."

"He is not there, To-hic. He started an hour ago for Montreal," said the old Indian. "Ugh!

Black clouds open their wings in the face of the sun sometimes. It is nothing strange—but beware of the snake, To-hic ; beware of the deadly moccasin creeping in the grass !” Then Ma-kee wrapped his dirty blanket about him, and crept on.

“What is this shadow that comes darkening my heart ?” thought Coaina. “I thought it was gone forever, but I feel the chill of it again. O, Great Spirit,” she cried, prostrating herself before the altar, “Thou sendest us joy ; Thou sendest us sorrow ; whatever Thou doest is right ; only keep me by the hand while the danger passes ; let me cling closer to thee, sweet Mother of Jesus, that I may not perish in the dark waters !”

Two or three days passed by, and Coaina saw but too plainly that her people looked askance at her. Some refused to notice her at all—others returned only a haughty nod to her salutations, and once, when she met Father Etienne, she imagined that, although he spoke kindly, he received her with a stern and troubled expression of countenance, neither stopping, as usual, to say a pleasant word, or lay his hand upon her head in blessing. Even the little children began to shrink from her, and stood back, gazing wonder-eye’d at her, when-

ever she addressed them, or sought to gather them about her. She felt bewildered by the strangeness of it all, but Father Etienne had told her that perhaps "it was half envy on the part of others, and half imagination in herself"—therefore it might be so; she would not resent it, but bear it patiently, in the good hope that God would accept her humiliation, which she offered in the true spirit of penance, in satisfaction for the many faults of her life, and in His own good time disperse the cloud which gathered so loweringly over her. Altontinon and Winonah were jubilant, and affected to be extremely kind to her, while Coaina, nothing doubting their sincerity, received their extraordinary attentions with gratitude, and felt comforted that they at least clung to her.

CHAPTER V.

LURED INTO THE SNARE.

EVERYTHING wore a change for Coaina—everything except the consolations afforded her by the divine sacraments. There was no change there. Untainted by the world, for whose salvation they were established, neither time, malice nor all the powers of hell combined can shake them from their eternal foundations, or strip them of the least of their attributes. Not of the “earth, earthy,” they never fail those who are faithful to them, and though all mankind stand against the soul, they, with infinite generosity, undying compassion, unselfish constancy, and prodigal love, encompass it round about, never ceasing their consoling ministrations, until that soul has reached the end of its thorny pilgrimage, and passed the portals of death to its everlasting reward.

Coaina realized the truth of this in a wonderful degree, for the more her “kinsmen and friends stood aloof,” the more constantly did she seek rest

for her wounded spirit in the life-giving sacraments, and shelter her troubled mind in the shadow of the sanctuary. She could understand nothing except that a time of tribulation had come upon her ; she could do nothing save put her trust in the justice and mercy of God, and the tender compassion of MARY, and patiently await the result.

One day after confession, Father Etienne asked her "if she had ever received any gifts from Ah-deek, the Iroquois?"

"Never, my father."

"Do you often see Ahdeek, Coaina?"

"Sometimes, at my aunt's lodge."

"Nowhere else?"

"Never, my father. Why should I?" Ahdeek is nothing to me."

"Very well ; I do not see why I should doubt your word, Coaina."

"Thank you, my father," she replied gently.

"My tongue never lies."

"Be careful, my child, that it never does," said Father Etienne. Then after a pause, he added : "There are evil reports abroad concerning you, Coaina ; I doubt them all, and shall continue to do so until their truth is proved. If false, you are reviled without cause, and God Himself will succor

you ; if true, then, my poor child, you are guilty of the most detestable hypocrisy. Being only man, I cannot read your soul, and in the absence of proof of your guilt or innocence, I dare not withhold the sacraments from you. The responsibility rests, then, upon your own soul. Go in peace."

She would have spoken, but a sob choked her utterance, and rising from her knees she hastily left the confessional, and fell, rather than bowed, at the feet of the image of the Immaculate Mother. She could not fashion the anguished emotions of her soul into words ; she felt, like her divine Saviour, all the bitterness without the guilt of the things whereof she was accused, and of which she was yet ignorant. Low sobs expressed her bitter suffering, and every tear she shed was an eloquent appeal to the compassion of God, as she knelt there, the innocent victim of the malice of her enemies.

No prayer ever uttered by prophet or saint can compare with the adoration of a speechless woe, which resigns itself in dumb resignation to the Divine will. His face may be hidden for a while by the cloud which veils it, but He is ever near ; and when His designs are accomplished, He disperses, by a single breath, the shadows which hid Him,

and lifts up the fainting soul with tender consolations, ofttimes crowning her with glory and eternal honor.

Where was Tar-ra-hee? He had returned from Montreal, and remained at home a week. One evening Coaina, after decorating the shrine of the Blessed Virgin with a garland of rich flowers which she had that day gathered in the forest, knelt down to recite the Rosary. While she dropped bead after bead, she thought of the sorrows that had crowned and pierced the immaculate heart of MARY, feeling all the time the sting of her own strange grief, until tears gathered in her eyes and rolled over her flushed cheeks. A quick, soft step entered the chapel, and then some one knelt, unperceived by her, not far from her. Covering her face with her hands, she bowed her head, resting it on the feet of the pure image of the Virgin Mother, and murmured: "Thou wilt not forsake me, my Protectress and Mother. Be thou my friend and consolatrix; then if all the world forsake me, what need I fear?" Her devotions over, she was about leaving the shrine, when some one touched her lightly upon the shoulder, and a familiar voice uttered her name in a low tone. She turned quickly, recognizing the voice, and saw Tar-ra-hee regard-

ing her with a grave and sad expression of countenance. A crimson blush mantled her face; she stood suddenly still, while her tearful eyes rested with a wild and startled expression on his face. He walked to the side door of the chapel, where thick vines drooped over a sort of trellised work, forming a vestibule screened with leaves and flowers, and beckoned her to him.

"I am glad to see you, Cyril," she said, standing before him with her hands folded, and her eyes modestly cast down.

"Is that what you also say to Ahdeek?" he asked, gravely.

"Who, Cyril? The Iroquois? I am never glad to see *him*."

"But you receive his gifts, Coaina!"

"I have never received aught from Ahdeek," she said quickly.

"And never see him—and never go to the forest to meet him?" exclaimed Tar-ra-hee.

"Never, Cyril. What could have poisoned your heart to believe such a dreadful thing?"

"Coaina, I thought, a few moments ago, when I saw you kneeling there so humbly, your head bowed like a magnolia flower after the storm, that you must be innocent, or you dared not pray. My

heart melted like the ice in the Ottawa, when the warm spring tides break it up, and I only thought of my love for my betrothed. But Coaina, what you say is not white ; it is a lie."

" Oh, Cyril—Cyril, my brother !" she cried, in anguish ; " tell me what you mean ! What have I done ?"

Then he told her about the mole-skin mantle. Ahdeek had shown it to him months ago, and told him it was to be worn only by his promised wife, and for that he was reserving it. He told her how unworthy Ahdeek was, and how blighting to a virtuous reputation was all association with him. Then he told her how his joy had suddenly turned into anger and mourning the day he returned home from fishing, and found her waiting on the shore for him arrayed in Ahdeek's gift.

" And was it not *your* gift, Cyril ? My aunt——" then a divine charity closed her lips.

" Did any one tell you it was from me, Coaina ?"

" I thought so, Cyril ; it was left for me. I thought it was *your* gift, and I wore it that evening to show you how much I valued it," she said earnestly, while the truth declared itself in every line of her now pale face.

" Is this true, Coaina ?" he asked, sternly.

"Our Blessed Mother is my witness that it is!" she replied, making a gesture with her hand towards the shrine. "Cyril, fearing the Great Spirit whose eye sees all, I dare not lie to thee, my betrothed."

"Poison has touched my heart," he said, looking down into the innocent and truthful face uplifted to his. "To-morrow, Coaina, I will see you again in the presence of your aunt, and if any have calumniated you, they shall answer to me for it." And as he spoke, the troubled and gloomy expression of Tar-ra-hee's eyes gave place to one more gentle and tender.

"Thank you, my brother," she replied, and was about to leave him when Altontinon bustled into the rustic vestibule, outside of which she had stood, and not only watched them through the leaves, but overheard all that passed, and said to Coaina in an agitated tone:

"Hasten home, Coaina; my child is ill. I fear the Iroquois fever is upon her. I am going to Ma-kee's lodge for herbs."

"I will go, aunt; I hope Winonah is not ill of the fever," she answered gently, while a dawning smile once more gave serenity to her features.

"Yes, *go!*" thought this malicious woman; "it

is all over for you, although you seem to think the sun is rising once more." Tar-ra-heo had re-entered the chapel, and was kneeling before the altar during this short conference ; and when Coaina, after a rapid walk, reached home, she found Winonah apparently ill of a burning fever, moaning and tossing on her pillow, as if in the greatest pain. Had Coaina but turned down the coverlid, she would have seen that Winonah was surrounded by heated bricks, which almost consumed her, and produced all the effects of violent fever. But so innocent and guileless was this saintly child of the forest, that she never suspected any one of deceit or wrong ; indeed, so full was her heart of a divine charity, that she only thought of concealing the faults of others, even when she discovered them.

The most criminal of all lies are those which are garnished here and there with the truth, making a plausible array of facts which can scarcely be contradicted without making the truth suffer, by dragging it through the mire of misrepresentation and falsehood, into which malice has plunged it. Never suspecting the practical lie before her, Coaina, in the simplicity of her heart, set about making her cousin comfortable. She gathered balm leaves from the garden and made her a refreshing drink,

and bathed her head with cool water from the spring; she bound plantain leaves about her wrists and darkened the lodge, after which she arrayed everything neatly, and spread the table for the serving meal. In her happiest moods she always liked flowers about her, and now that her interview with Tar-ra-hee gave her a promise of returning tranquillity, she gathered a rich cluster from the aster and chryssanthomum bushes, which cluster around the doors and windows of the lodge, and set them in the midst of the table. It was quite twilight by the time she completed her arrangements. Winonah seemed to be sleeping, and Coaina went to the door to await the return of her aunt, when a lad—she could not distinguish his features—sprang over the stile and handed her a folded scrap of paper, then ran off again with the greatest speed. It was so dark that she could not distinguish a word of the writing which she perceived was in it, so hurrying in, she stirred the embers, and cast into the glowing coals a knot of resinous pine, which quickly kindled, and threw out a ruddy blaze which illuminated every part of the room. Then opening the letter, she read:

“My child, come to me directly, to the hut just beyond the pines, outside the Iroquois village.

Two young girls are dying, and will be baptized if you will come to them. Hasten. FATHER ETIENNE."

Without waiting a moment to consider, Coaina stepped in to see if her cousin still slept, and finding that she did, she wrapped her cloak about her and went forth, as she thought, on an errand of charity, at the bidding of her spiritual guide; but instead of that she was lured away, like a young gazelle, into the snare of the hunter, to suffer the crowning effort of the malice of her enemies.

That night also, Tar-ra-hee received a mysterious notification "to keep watch from day-dawn until sunrise," from a cliff which was overhung by an uprooted hemlock tree, that projected over the road leading to the Iroquois village, and commanded a view of two or three miles extent. He was told "to expect something which would unravel a mystery, and open his eyes to the truth." Troubled in heart, and full of but one thought, he determined to go, hoping that the unravelled mystery would be the full exculpation of Coaina.

CHAPTER VI.

THE IROQUOIS LODGE.

COAINA had no difficulty in finding the lodge designated in the letter. She paused a moment to rest, having walked very rapidly, then lifted the curtain of deer skins which hung over the entrance, and walked in ; but she found no one there except an old woman, who feebly smoked her dirty pipe as she crouched in a corner upon a bed of bear skins.

"Where is Father Etienne?" asked Coaina, gently.

But the old squaw was deaf, and only stared at her with her bleared eyes. By and by a lad came in, who, when he saw Coaina, started to run out, but she caught him by the arm, and asked: "Where is Father Etienne?"

"He says you must wait. He will come presently."

"It is good," she answered. "But who is ill?"

"Hush-sh-sh!" said the old squaw, seeing that they talked, and pointing towards the inner re-

cesses of the lodge, which were curtained off with skins.

“Are they very ill?” she asked the lad.

“Ugh!” replied the lad, shortly and sullenly, for he had glanced at the old squaw in time to see her shaking her shrivelled fist towards him—a warning which he knew from experience was not to be despised; then he slunk out of the lodge. Coaina, thinking only of the object which led her there, and nothing doubting but that Father Etienne would come presently, took out her rosary, and, holding it beneath her mantle, began the decade of the five sorrowful mysteries; offering her intention for the dying *ones* she had come to assist. She drew back into an angle formed by the irregular wall of the lodge; and partially concealed by a bark-covered cedar post which helped to support the roof, she closed her eyes, and was soon lost to all her strange surroundings in her devout meditations upon the august dolors of Mary. The sound of muffled footsteps, and that soft, indescribable rustle of garments, roused her attention, and thinking that Father Etienne had come, she unclosed her eyes, but saw, instead of Father Etienne, a crowd of dusky forms, whose hideously painted faces and gaudy attire, whose keen, cunning eyes

and gleaming hatchets, filled her with perplexity and alarm. Among them, in the centre of the group, she recognized Ahdeek. According to the ways of her people, Coaina seldom showed either surprise or alarm, and now she calmly arose, and stepping forward, asked once more: "Where is Father Etienne?"

"He is not here, To-hic. This is a strange place to seek him," he replied.

"He sent for me here. Here is his letter," said Coaina, as a cold sensation thrilled through her heart. Ahdeek took the letter, while a gleam of triumph shot across his swarthy visage, pretended to read it, then tore it into pieces, and scattered the fragments with a scornful laugh.

"So," said a leering old chief, "the Algonquin christian can come to the lodge of the Iroquois medicine man, to see Taho. What will the man of prayer say?"

"I came here to see two Iroquois maidens baptized into the christian faith. Where are they? I will go to them," she replied, with an undaunted look, as she attempted to pass the group of Indians, for the purpose of leaving the lodge. But instantly a score of bright hatchets and knotty clubs were lifted over her head. Startled and ter-

rified, but outwardly calm and brave, she folded her hands upon her breast, and looking full into the grim faces which scowled around her, she asked, in a clear and distinct tone: "By what right do you hold me prisoner?"

"By *my* will!" said Ahdeek, and every one of his dusky satellites responded "Ugh!" "You have curled the lip in scorn of the chief of the Iroquois," Ahdeek went on to say; "he is strong, and not to be driven off like a dog!"

"Have I ever harmed you, Ahdeek? It is not the part of a brave chief to make war against a defenceless woman. Let me go free," said Coaina.

"Listen, Coaina. My lodge is empty. I have no one there to light the fire upon my hearth; no one to dress the skins that I take in hunting, or cook my fish and venison. I need you. Be my wife. You shall have all that the daughter and wife of a great chief needs. You shall not toil. You shall have the softest furs of the stone-marten and fitch; your robes shall be decked with sables which I will fetch from the dark Suaganay; and your couch shall be spread with the soft skins of the beaver. You shall have the brightest beads, fringes of gold and silver, stuffs with all the colors of the rainbow, and plenty all the year round. Will you come to

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my lodge, Coaina?" said Ahdeek, hoping to dazzle her by his boastful promises.

"No, Ahdeek. No. I am already, in the sight of heaven, the spouse of Tar-ra-hee, the chief of the Algonquins. Even were I not, I would not come into the lodge of an unbeliever," replied Coaina, still standing bravely erect.

"The chief of the Algonquins would rather marry my old grandmother there than you, Coaina. The eagle will never mate with the carrion-crow. Tar-ra-hee despises you. What will he say when he knows where you spent the night?" asked Ahdeek, with a malicious grin.

"Ah, Ahdeek," wailed Coaina, as a full sense of her peril broke upon her mind, while she stretched out her hands towards him, "be generous, and let me go hence in peace."

"You are my captive until the day dawns. You shall have a new baptism, Coaina, then I will conduct you safely home. You are safe, To-hic, unless you do yourself hurt; only be quiet in the trap into which you are snared," he said. He then gave a brief order to the savages around to guard the entrance to the lodge, while two kept watch on each side of Coaina, watching her faintest movement. There was no hope of escape, for this swar-

thy crowd was composed of those among the Iroquois who still rejected christianity ; who believed in the traditionary fables of their people, the superstitious rites associated with their worship ; who had unlimited faith in the evil spirits of the water and forest, in magic and omens ; who worshipped corn as a deity, and adored fire ; who were unscrupulous in their morals, and believed in no higher law than obedience to their chief, and a due observance of their traditionary customs.

“ Ahdeek,” she said, in a solemn and impressive tone, “ Ahdeek, you have betrayed me. You have snared me like a simple cony of the forest ; but remember that my God is powerful—that He will bring to nought your wickedness, and make you fall into the pit you have dug for me.”

“ Let Him help you now, To-hic,” said Ahdeek, scornfully. “ Now’s the time !”

“ In His own good time will He deliver me. I adore His will, and await His coming,” she said, clasping her hands together, and looking upwards with a gaze so supernaturally bright that one would have thought her sight penetrated far beyond the night, and beheld the face of the great Deliverer of whom she spoke.

“ She talks of the great Manito,” they whispered

around her. "She has the heart of a warrior."

Coaina saw how futile were her hopes of escape, and, with a sharp human pang, she resigned herself to the bitter necessity of her situation, while she implored the protection of Almighty God, and invoked the assistance of the Immaculate Mother. She felt that, beside these, she had none else to fly to. She knew that on the morrow she would be scorned and cast out by her people, for who would believe in her innocence, in the face of such evidence, when her reputation was already tainted by calumny? Her enemies had snared her, and thrown over her innocence a garment of blackness which no eye could penetrate save the sleepless eye of the All-seeing; which no glance of loving compassion could fathom save *hers*—the Mother of Jesus; which all would shrink from with scorn, save the angels who were given charge over her. In one sense we may exclaim: "Poor, forlorn Coaina!" In another we may exclaim: "O, maiden of divine predilection! honored art thou in thy sorrow and shame! thy thorny griefs are budding heavenly blossoms for the crown which is weaving for thee in heaven!"

Thus resting in strong faith upon God's promises, Coaina's troubled heart grew more calm. The rich

blood had forsaken her face, leaving it cold and pale, and as she stood leaning against the cedar post, she looked like a statue carved out of stone, so motionless and apparently breathless was she.

Suddenly a bright red gleam shot across her closed eyes. When she opened them she saw a pyramid of faggots heaped up in the middle of the lodge, under which a fire had been kindled, and now shot here and there, between the interstices of the wood, red tongues of flame, which crept in and out like fiery serpents. Around this fire stood, first in order, the children and young people, and behind them, those more advanced in life. In the centre was the medicine man, in his grotesque trappings, and hideously disguised.

At a signal from him, all raised their hands; he threw a piece of deer's fat into the flames, when every one present cried out, in a measured and unearthly chant: "Taho! Taho!" After this, a small space was cleared by the medicine man, who now produced a pouch in which there was a pipe and powder, which he called *potu*! The pouch was carried solemnly around the fire, all chanting Taho! Taho! after which the *potu* was taken from the pouch, and distributed to all the men, who smoked it, and fumigated their bodies with it as

with something sacred. An Iroquois filled a pipe with it, and lighting it by his own, handed it to Coaina, who, by a quick movement of her hand, dashed it to the ground and placed her foot upon it, exclaiming : "In the name of Christ, I trample on all idolatry !"

This enraged the Indians beyond expression, and they would immediately have done her violence for her contempt of a right which they held sacred, had not Ahdeek interposed his authority, which they, on the present occasion, sullenly obeyed.

At length the dawn crept through the crevices of the lodge, and ere long a deeper glow of crimson heralded the rising of the sun ; then Ahdeek approached Coaina, and told her she was free to go. She sprang from the lodge, like a wild doe from the trap of the hunter, hoping to escape the attendance of Ahdeek, with which he had threatened her, and get back in time to be present at Mass ; but he, watchful of every movement, was in an instant by her side, and—well named the Deer—easily kept pace with her swift footsteps. Glorious was the rising of the red and golden light out of darkness ; brilliantly fell the splendid rays upon the hoarfrost, which glimmered like myriads of tiny crys-

tals on the grass and leaves ; joyfully dashed the scarlet-crested woodpecker from tree to tree ; a low warbling echoed fitfully and sweetly among the gorgeous foliage of the forest ; and here and there, chattering over their forage, the grey squirrels, with feathery tail erect, scampered up and down the branches. Nature smiled, rejoicing over the birth of this new day, which was so full of sorrow to the young Indian maiden, now hastening homeward, all heedless of the brightness around her, and compelled to bear the presence of her enemy, who kept close behind her, determined not to separate himself from her until the eyes of all the village had witnessed her shame. Suddenly an object standing on the edge of a projecting rock, and half hidden by an overhanging hemlock tree, arrested Coaina's attention ; she shaded her eyes with her hand, and looked intently for an instant, then, uttering a low cry, she stretched her arms towards it, but it disappeared in the shadow of the forest, flitting away like a mist before her eyes. Then she fell fainting to the ground. It was Tar-ra-hee !

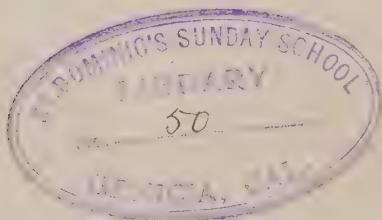
Altontinon had sought him the evening before, and told him, with protestations of reluctance, and had even shed tears, that the Iroquois held that night the festival of Taho ; that she had good reason for

knowing that certain of their people would be present, and advised him, as chief of his tribe, to watch and see if any baptized Algonquin attended it secretly—then she hinted at her hidden griefs about Coaina, darkly intimating things which she declared she dared not disclose. This interview following so close upon the mysterious billet he had received, aroused in Tar-ra-hee's mind the most suspicious vigilance. He could not sleep, but long before dawn took his station upon the overhanging rock we have described, and there waiting patiently, with a dull, heavy misgiving at his heart, he at last saw Coaina emerge from the Iroquois lodge, attended by Ahdeek. It needed no more to convince him that Coaina was not only false to him, but that she had lived a most hypocritical life, and was unworthy of a regret. He was a christian—he would not, therefore, revenge himself upon the Iroquois by taking his life; he would formally and publicly annul his betrothal to Coaina, and, leaving her to the punishment her crime deserved, go away from the tribe, to hunt along the shores of the dark Sauganay.

This was the conclusion which, after long and silent cogitations, he arrived at; then he sought Father Etienne, and laid bare his heart before him;

after which he privately consulted with the chief men of his people; and notified them to meet in solemn assembly the next day.

Pause an instant, reader, whether young or old, and reflect on the evils of malice, slander and rash judgment. We have seen how innocent Coaina was, how truly pious and unblemished was her life before heaven; and yet we behold her clothed with depravity as with a garment, a despised and rejected outcast; wearing all the appearance of guilt and hypocrisy, through the *pride, malice, ambition* and *envy* of others, who, still esteemed and honored, triumphed for a season in their wickedness. *And remember, friend, this is no fiction!* Coaina actually lived and suffered as our feeble pen describes, and to this day the young girls of "the Lake of the Two Mountains" will lead the stranger to her grave, and with fast-falling tears relate, as they twine wild flowers around her place of rest. her mournful story.



CHAPTER VII.

LIKE A SHEEP BEFORE HER SHEARERS, SHE WAS
DUMB.

WHEN Coaina saw Tar-ra-hee watching from the crag, and knew that he must have seen her leave the Iroquois lodge followed by Ahdeek, she felt as if some one had given her a heavy blow on her head ; she staggered and grew faint and dizzy ; then everything like brightness faded out of the air, and she fell to the earth, bereft of consciousness. Ahdeek stood, for a moment, perplexed and irresolute, but an idea suddenly presented itself which not only solved the difficulty of his position, but turned the accident to account ; so, lifting the light and insensible form of Coaina in his strong arms, he sped swiftly to the village of the Algonquins, passing each wondering group he met without speaking, until he reached the lodge of Altontinon, who met him at the door with her hair dishevelled and her face disfigured with weeping, surrounded by three or four of her relatives, who all pressed silently but

eagerly forward to look upon the pallid face lying so helplessly upon the shoulder of the Iroquois.

She had alarmed the whole village, the night before, by reporting Coaina's disappearance, professing all the time, the greatest grief and uneasiness about her, even while she secretly exulted in the certainty that she had fallen into the snare spread for her by her malicious arts. Now, when she saw Coaina brought to her door dead, as she thought, her pretended grief was changed to genuine alarm, and wringing her hands, she uttered the mournful and peculiar cry called by the Indians *wakonowen*, prolonging its shrill cadences until the whole air echoed with its sad notes, and one after another, within range of its sound, hurried hither, until quite a crowd had collected in and around the lodge.

"She is not dead," said Ahdeek, laying his light burden down upon a pile of skins and furs hastily thrown together by Winonah and some of the women. "She is not dead," he continued, as Altontion paused in her lamentations to take breath, while every ear was strained to catch all that he had to say, "but the *Taho* was too much for her."

"The *Taho*!" screamed a woman, drawing her two little girls close to her. "Was Coaina—the

child of our Blessed Mother—the Rose of our tribe *there!*”

“Esa! esa! and she the head of the Confraternity of the Rosary!” exclaimed another.

“And to think *we* were always taught to try and be like *her*,” added a young girl.

“I almost felt afraid to touch the hem of her garment!” said Winonah.

“Oh, the detestable hypocrite!” said an old squaw, wagging her head.

“To think how we all loved her!” said a young girl, sadly.

“Think of her deceiving Father Etienne and our young chief! It is good she was caught in time!” said a grave looking woman, who had not yet spoken.

Old Ma-kee now edged his way feebly through the crowd, and stood looking down on the still, piteous face of Coaina. The muscles in his old withered cheeks worked, and a wonderfully tender and sorrowful look came over the usual fierce expression of his eyes. He stooped down and smoothed her small dusky hand, and laid his own shrunken, tawny hand lightly upon her forehead. Then he stood up and said: “*To-hic* has done no evil. I

saw a white kid stung to death by a moccasin : I killed the snake. I was young then ; now I am old, but my arm is not too withered to strike down the snake that stung To-hic. Where is the Iroquois ?” There was a fierce, deathly gleam in the old pagan’s eye as he looked around the circle of dusky faces who were watching him ; they moved back, for as he moved his arm it lifted his blanket, and they saw that he wore a long, bright knife in his girdle, and a hatchet, keenly sharpened. But Ahdeek had long since slipped away, and was heard of, weeks afterwards, hunting in the forests of Maine. A grim look of contempt stole over Ma-kee’s features, then he turned to Altontinon and said : “ The snows of nearly eighty winters have brought me wisdom. I see what I see and know what I know. I found a young pigeon once in the forest, with its wing broken. I put it into a nest of young crows, and watched. The old mother crow came home and tore the pigeon to pieces to feed her own young.” Then he marched off, well satisfied that he had struck no chance blow at Altontinon.

“ It’s no wonder old Ma-kee likes her,” said Winonah, “ since she goes to the Taho, and is a pagan like himself. But see ! Coaina opens her eyes !” she cried, gazing down with gratified

malice on the mournful and beautiful face of her cousin.

“Go for Father Etienne, Winonah. Friends, stand back, and give the unfortunate one air and water. She must not perish in her wickedness. Oh, to think, after all my care—oh! oh! oh!”—cried Altontinon, quite overcome, or rather pretending to be so.

Every one Winonah met on her way to Father Etienne’s, she told the news that Coaina had “spent the night in the medicine lodge of the Iroquois, and assisted at their superstitious rites. She went with Ahdeek, and everybody knew Ahdeek; yes, she was at the Taho, and everybody knew what *that* was.”

“So,” thought some, “we have been deceived.” But most of those who heard the strange and dreadful news were shocked and bewildered. If that bright and glorious star, worshipped with divine honors by their fathers in the primitive days, and still regarded by the Indians as the most splendidly beauteous of all that spangle the blue robes of heaven, had fallen a black and shapeless mass at their feet, they could not have been more amazed than at the fall of Coaina, in whom they had never seen speck or flaw, and who was, after the Blessed

Virgin, the purest model of womanly and christian virtues they knew on earth. So blithe, so modest, so amiable towards all; "who," they wondered, "could ever feel envy or bitterness for Coaina? What enemies had she to plan such slanders? none. Then, alas! it must be true!" Alack-a-day! the evil days had indeed come for the young Algonquin maid, since even her best and dearest friends and kinsmen were deceived. There was none to help her on earth. Only the Great Spirit and His Immaculate Mother knew the innocence of that soul, which was to suffer such keen sorrows, holding it in a divine sanctuary; the powers of earth might crucify her flesh, but never pluck down or wither a single blossom of her crown; for *there* she was eternally safe. But having formed her life on theirs, she must drink, with resignation, of their bitter chalice—be, like Mary, suspected of evil, and, like Jesus, be reviled and cast out by her own people.

And the good Father Etienne—he was but human! There was no supernatural power to tell him that all this condemnatory, circumstantial evidence against Coaina was utterly false. He was speechless when Tar-ra-hee told him what he had witnessed with his own eyes. It seemed like the culminating proof of all else that had been whis-

pered against her. When left alone, the good priest, with a sharp pang at heart, entered the sanctuary to mourn, in silence, over the fall of this child of many graces, who had not only given such scandal to religion, and humiliated christians, but had afforded a new triumph to the heathen and unbelievers, and to pray for guidance in conducting the trial on the morrow. Winonah waited long to see him, and when he, at length, left the chapel, she delivered her errand. Without speaking, he turned and walked quietly to Altontinon's lodge, which was, by this time, crowded with the friends and kinsmen of Altontinon and Tar-ra-hee, sitting or standing, in grave and boding silence, around the apartment, while in the midst, seated upon a rude bench, was Coaina, silent, pallid and drooping, her long, graceful hands folded together on her knees, while her attire, usually trim and neat, was damp and disarranged, and her long, rich tresses fell carelessly over her shoulders to the earthen floor. There she sat, like Job, accused of a hundred sins of which she was guiltless. There she sat, like her Lord in the hall of Pilate, awaiting the judgment of an extreme penalty for the crimes of others. Way was made for Father Etienne who, to the surprise of all, was followed by Tar-ra-hee,

stern, grave and decorous, his rich blanket falling in graceful folds from his shoulders, and wearing no ornament except a large silver medal of the Blessed Virgin.

Coaina looked up when she saw the skirt of Father Etienne's *soutane*, with a gleam of hope in her eyes ; but when she saw his stern countenance and averted eyes, and just behind him the grave and clouded face of Tar-ra-hee, over which gleamed not a single ray of pity, a vivid crimson dyed her face, neck and hands ; her eyelids, heavy with their long, dusky lashes, drooped upon her cheeks, and her lips, now suddenly grown pallid, quivered with agony.

"Coaina," said Father Etienne, "stand up and speak the truth when I question you. For the sake of your own soul and religion, I adjure you, in the sacred names of Jesus and Mary, to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth."

"I will, my father," she answered, in a low, distinct tone, as she arose.

"Where did you spend the night?"

"In the medicine lodge of the Iroquois."

"What did you see there?"

"I saw the Taho."

"Were you taken to the medicine lodge by violence?"

"No, my father," she said, looking up with a bewildered expression.

"Who did you see there you knew?"

"Only Ahdeek, my father."

"Why did you go there, Coaina?"

"I got a letter from you telling me to come."

Here every dusky face leaned forward, and Father Etienne knitted his brows, while his face exhibited the strongest emotion.

"That is false, unfortunate child! It is also a slander," he said sternly. "Where is that letter?"

"I have it not, my father. Ahdeek tore it up."

"What did it say?" asked Father Etienne.

"It said, 'two girls of the Iroquois are dying, and will not be baptized until you come. Come quickly to the lodge beyond the pines outside the Iroquois village. That is what I remember. Your name, my father, was to it. I thought I obeyed you. After I got there I saw that I was entrapped, but I could not escape.'"

"That is a well got up story, Coaina; shame upon you!" said Altontinon, stepping forward. "No letter came to her, my father. Winonah says that none came. Winonah was sick, and I left Coaina to nurse her; but she left her and went away without saying where. It is like the mantle Ah-

deek gave her. Ahdeek has been Coaina's lover since she was a child."

"Did Ahdeek give you that mantle, Coaina?" asked Father Etienne.

"I was told that—that—Tar-ra-hee had left it for me," she replied, gently.

"Oh, the bold one!" exclaimed her aunt. "I told her before Winonah that Ahdeek had brought her the mantle—she knows I did. And now I must speak. Coaina is not honest. She is not true. She steals my money, and sends it to Montreal to buy finery. She has told me many lies. My life has been worn out with her, and trying to hide her faults. Her ingratitude and hypocrisy I could bear, but I dared not let her carry dishonor into the lodge of Tar-ra-hee."

"There are calumnies," says a modern writer, "so great as to confuse innocence itself." Thus it was with poor Coaina. She saw that the evidence against her was strong, without being true. Events had encompassed her like a net, and confirmed all the slanders of her enemies. Everything made her appear more guilty; there was no witness to disprove the charges, and benumbed in her still anguish, she said not a word, but, "like a sheep before her shearers, she was dumb."

"Miserable child," said Father Etienne, breaking the breathless silence, while tears rolled unbidden over his aged cheeks. "There is nothing left for you but penance for your vices and crimes. You have brought great scandal on religion, you have wounded charity, you have been guilty of base ingratitude, you have outraged decency, and, to crown your sins, you have renewed the bitter Passion of Jesus Christ, and pierced with a sword of grief the heart of His tender Mother. I cannot pronounce your sentence until the assembly investigate your case and consult upon it. I came here hoping to find you innocent; I go away believing you guilty. Go to your room, and remain there until your people decide upon your punishment, and may Almighty God bring you to repentance."

Coaina arose, folded her hands upon her bosom, and bowed in token of obedience, then walked tremblingly away to the curtained corner of the lodge called hers. Lifting the curtain, she disappeared from the eyes of her traducers and enemies, and falling prostrate upon the floor, her soul sent up its strong appeal unto Him who alone knew her innocence; to Him who would never turn away from her, and on whose strong arm she could lean on this her day of tribulation; to Him in

whom she would trust, even though He might slay her. But the passion of her grief was bitter. She was only human, and this casting of her out, this rending of the ties which had so long bound her to her friends, her director, her kinsmen, was terrible to bear, and gave separate and fierce wounds to her natural life, as each one was parted asunder. The cross was heavy to-day, but on the morrow it would become almost insupportable, while the clouds hanging gloomily above her would gather more darkly around her way.

CHAPTER VIII.

COAINA'S SENTENCE.

TO DESCRIBE the judicial proceedings of the assembly in Coaina's case would stretch my narrative to a wearisome length; therefore, I will simply relate that, after due deliberation and a careful examination of the *apparent facts* of the case, those facts which, according to the judgment of all concerned, were incontestibly proved by credible witnesses, a verdict was rendered, and sentence pronounced on the beautiful and innocent Rose of the

Algonquins. Here I will quote from Monsigneur De C——'s statement.

Coaina was sentenced :

“*First.* To live alone in a hut adjoining her aunt's lodge.

“*Second.* To perform such servile offices for her as might be needed.

“*Third.* To seek and encourage no intercourse with the young people of the mission.

“*Fourth.* To wear the garb of a public penitent.

“*Fifth.* To have her hair cut close, and wear a coarse veil.

“*Sixth* (and the most terrible of all to her). She was to be deprived of the sacraments, and was forbidden to enter the chapel, but was to kneel in her penitential dress at the door, during the celebration of all the sacred rites, offices and ceremonies of the Church, with the title of *hypocrite* printed in large letters and suspended upon her breast.”

On the same day she was invested in her robes of humiliation. Crowned with ignominy, she knelt at the door of that chapel of which she was the angel, receiving, instead of homage, the cold sneers, the cruel whispers, the open condemnation, the mockery and scorn of all who passed her by.

Let us pause here an instant, to discriminate

between the malice and hypocrisy of Coaina's enemies who *knew* her innocence, and the mistaken conviction of those of her former friends who believed her guilty. For the first there is no excuse; they deliberately and maliciously planned the desolation and ruin of that young life; they made it appear that a great and public scandal had been committed, and so perjured themselves as to deceive not only the good Father Etienne, but also the sincere christians of his flock, who thought her punishment, when measured by her apparent guilt, was not too heavy. The ill opinion of the wicked is without a sting; but when the good, the charitable and just, deceived by false reports, or otherwise, array themselves against one, then indeed an indescribable bitterness is added to the cup of woe, and the soul cries out, in the darkness and desolation of its abandonment: "My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" All of Coaina's former friends and admirers could now only regard her as a hypocrite, who had long and speciously deceived them; so, full of horror at the reflection of her sacrilegious life, they shrunk from her as from a pestilence, and publicly resented the dishonor and scandal she had brought upon religion. And yet these were innocent before heaven, through the blindness of human

judgment; the originators of the monstrous wrong were alone responsible for *all* the evil and *all* the scandal that had grown out of their selfish pride and malice. Old Ma-kee, who was a heathen, you know, caring neither for God or man, paid no heed to the *interdict*, and had no feeling except that of indignation at the humiliation of the only thing upon earth that he loved, and he resented it by disowning his people, as they had disowned her. It was he who gathered the wild forest flowers and brought them to her hut, or laid them beside her as she knelt at the chapel door; it was he whose harsh old quavering voice fell in accents of kindness upon her ear; he who, more than once, had given such sudden and well-aimed blows at the urchins who taunted and mocked her that they fell stunned and sprawling upon the grass. To Altontinon and Winonah he had become an incubus and terror. They cowered beneath the fierce gleam of the old pagan's eye, and would rather have heard the most deafening thunder that ever sped its bolt into the depths of the forest, than to hear old Ma-kee's bitter whisper of "Snakes! snakes! snakes!" hissed in their ear as they passed by.

Deeply touched by the old Indian's constant affection, Coaina prayed incessantly for his conver-

sion, and also for that of her aunt and cousin, as well as of all others who had injured her. In fact, she, who had been cast out as unworthy by her people, was now their pleading angel, who forgot her wrongs in the exercise of a divine charity.

Father Etienne sorrowed and prayed for the poor penitent, who bore her cross with such sweetness and patience; he had at times a suspicion that she was the innocent victim of a base plot; but the mystery—if there was one—was too deep for him to fathom, and the scandal had been too public to go unpunished. And so the time passed until the next moon, when the Indians departed with their families and household effects, in their birchen canoes, for the distant northwest, where, surrounded by incredible hardships, they hunted the bison and the deer, the otter and the mink, the beaver and the bear, and other smaller game. Coaina accompanied them, still as a public penitent, and the servant of her aunt, the change bringing naught to her except greater hardships, which she bore without murmuring.

And so three years passed by. The mystery was still unsolved, and Coaina still wore her penitential garb, was still interdicted an approach to

the sacraments, was still a by-word and reproach among her people. The only event of any importance in prospect, was the reported marriage of Tar-ra-hee and Winonah, for which it was said, preparations were being made. Ahdeek never re-appeared among his people. It was rumored that in crossing the St. Lawrence in his canoe, it had been drawn into the whirl of the rapids, and dashed over the great falls into the foaming abyss below. An Indian certainly perished there about that time, within sight of thousands of spectators, and as he never returned or was heard of again, the inference was accepted that the unfortunate wretch was Ahdeek.

Again came the month of the falling leaves, and once more the mission was in a grand commotion, preparing for the annual migration to the distant hunting grounds, two thousand miles off. Father Etienne, as usual, was to accompany them. Another priest, a young and saintly missionary, who had fled from the endearments of noble kindred and home in his dear land of France; who had turned his back upon honors and all the charms of civilization, to labor among the heathen tribes of the far west—asked and gained permission to join com-

pany with them, an incident which was a great solace to Father Etienne, who was growing old. (Monsieur De C.)

On a certain day they all embarked in their frail canoes, to start on their perilous voyage to the western plains. At certain places, to avoid the sweeping rapids, the terrific rocks and falls, they leave the river, carrying their canoes and baggage past the dangerous spots, when they again launch their frail vessels, and embark.

Bearing the same hardships and dangers as themselves, Father Etienne cheered and encouraged them as much by his counsel as his example, performing the offices of priest and comforter with tireless zeal, sometimes celebrating the holy mysteries on the bosom of some broad, calm river, with the picturesque fleet drawn up in perfect order around the floating altar, the paddles at rest, and gay pennons flying, while every dusky face and form in the gentle rocking canoes was bent with reverent and adoring attention towards the "canoe of prayer and sacrifice." These were occasions of deep and unutterable joy to our poor penitent, who, sometimes near, and sometimes farther off, in her aunt's canoe, witnessed the sacred mystery. Sometimes Mass was celebrated under the flame-colored

branches of the primeval forest ; sometimes on the mountain side ; sometimes upon a desolate shore. But it was the great refreshment and consolation of this weary nomadic people, when and wherever celebrated. The place was nothing to them—the sacrament everything.

One sad incident occurred. The canoe in which the young French missionary, with four Abnaki Indians, were making the voyage, one day got far ahead of the mission flotilla, which proceeded slowly, on account of the dangerous rapids, whose current was powerfully felt long before they were seen ; nor could all the signals which were made for them to return induce them to do so—probably they were misunderstood as cheering signals for them to proceed in the race they had won so far in advance. Suddenly the canoe was drawn into the mighty current, and whirled like a dead leaf amongst the foaming, shrieking waters ; now lost to sight amid cataracts of spray, now tossed like a feather on the gale, high upon the surface, with five human beings clinging hopelessly to its sides, Then, in the twinkling of an eye, it was engulfed forever ; the young missionary received the reward of eternal life for the mortal life he had so generously and nobly given to God's service.

At length, having arrived at the place best suited for their purposes, and most convenient for hunting, the Indians disembarked, and each family selecting a site, erected a wigwam of boughs, which they covered with skins sewed together. In a short time the business of the winter begins; the men, and women also, hunt and fish continually, living upon the animals they kill; dressing the skins, and preserving with great care the costly furs, which they sell readily in Montreal for high prices, and to traders from the United States. In this hunting expedition no one was more expert or successful than Coaina in securing much costly game. Her aim was unerring, and when she drew the string of her bow her arrow sped like lightning into a vital part of the animal, without tearing the fur. Swans, wild turkeys, an eagle, and small game of every kind, loaded her aunt's wigwam, who, with Winonah, prepared the peltry for the markets, sheltered from cold, and enduring no real hardships. But still they found no kind word for the patient Coaina. Injurious epithets, blows, scanty fare, and hardships of every kind were her reward. What incited them to greater malignity, was the fact that Tar-ra-hee had left his people, at the mouth of the Sauganay, to spend the winter

with some of his braves on its bleak shores, to hunt the white bear, the seal and the beaver, and for this disappointment they wreaked their spite on Coaina, whose heart, sore, and almost breaking under the torture of her undeserved ill-usage, clung tremblingly and closer to Jesus and Mary, fearful that after all she should lose patience and forfeit her only good. But nothing touched the hearts of these evil-minded, obdurate women ; her very patience and defencelessness, so far from appealing to their generosity and forbearance, seemed to excite them to greater cruelty and malice. No one observed it, but Coaina's cheek had lost its beautiful roundness of outline ; her step, still swift and agile, was often checked by shortness of breath, and wild, painful heart-throbs. The rich blood no longer glowed in transparent suffusion through her amber-colored skin, and delicately chiseled lips ; there was a spot of crimson upon each thin cheek, like the first reddening flame which consumes the life of the maple leaf in autumn. Her eyes—now seldom lifted—sparkled with a strange glow beneath her heavy eye-lids, and when suddenly raised by some one speaking to her, or in surprise at some distant sound, they looked like those of a hunted gazelle. Outcast and despised, her communings

had long ceased to be of this life, or of its small affairs. The world had thrown her off as more worthless than the refuse of a dung-hill ; but could the veil have been, but one moment, withdrawn, could mortal eyes have, but for one instant, beheld the "glorious ones in shining raiment" who surrounded her, who enfolded her within the embraces of their stainless wings, guarding her soul's integrity as a precious and priceless jewel, they would have fallen upon their faces before her, invoking her forgiveness and prayers.

But neither to her or them was such sight vouchsafed. The designs of God must ripen according to His wisdom, and for Coaina the consummation was near at hand.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TWO SHADOWS.

THE season of leaves and flowers had again rolled round; the bluebird whistled in the air, and the bobolink sounded his low bugle as he raided with his brown troopers through the feathery ferns. Everything wore a gay and prosperous look in the village of the lake. The hunting season had been extremely successful, not only in the quantity of game secured, but in the quality and abundance of rare furs, skins, and other valuable peltries they were enabled to bring home. Better still, the price of peltries had gone up considerably higher than was ever known before, owing to an increased demand from the United States and England, which was really in excess of the supply; hence our Indians of the mission found themselves richer than they had ever been before. On Sundays and holidays the church looked like a tropical *parterre*, with the array of rich, bright colors in the attire of the women, whose new variegated handkerchiefs,

blue scarfs, scarlet petticoats, spangled jackets and fringed tunics, were in harmonious keeping with the magnificent hunting shirts—decorated with beads and fringes—of the men, who displayed new scarlet leggings, wrought curiously with porcupine quills, and moccasins flaming with scarlet, with glittering beads and tinsel. Altontinon and Wino-nah held their heads higher than ever, while the extreme gaudiness of their apparel, extravagant both in texture and style, attracted every eye. While the other women and young girls observed a fitting degree of moderation and modesty in their attire, these two flaunted about arrayed in the gaudiest colors, the flashiest trinkets, the heaviest coils of beads, and the most exaggerated style of garments that the wildest Indian fancy could suggest, or the markets of Montreal supply.

A great improvement was also evident in the increased comforts of their rude lodges, in the richer adornment of their beloved chapel, and the quality and quantity of their agricultural implements; indeed, the village of the “Lake of the Two Mountains” seemed like the centre of a happy pastoral Arcadia, into which no grief could enter.

In the midst of all this gay prosperity and cheerful plenty, there was ever moving to and fro, or

kneeling with bowed head at the chapel door, a silent, shadowy form, clothed in coarse, penitential garments of grey. This shadowy, veiled figure was never noticed, except to be jostled aside and scoffed at as it glided through the mission grounds. And it moved like one walking in a dream. If she was jostled rudely, or called out to roughly, or had her veil or garments plucked at by the village urchins, she would suddenly lift her great soft eyes, and with a bright, wild glance around, as if she had been startled from solemn reverie, deep within her inner life, smile sorrowfully, look down again, and move on.

There was this shadow, which the Algonquins saw daily ; a shadow for whose presence they had only contempt, or a silent indifference—the shadow of a crushed life, the summing up of all that slander could do.

But there was another shadow coming towards them, slowly and inevitably, the very thought of which made the bravest heart among them quail. This shadow had already reached Montreal, and they even now felt the vibrations of its noiseless but mighty tread, already felt the cold thrill of its viewless form. They could not keep it away ; neither barriers nor all the engineering that science

has ever taught—neither the bravery of warriors, the exorcism of priests, nor the tears and prayers of a people, could stay its course, because it was the stern messenger of the Most High, whose mission it was to chasten, to punish and remind the world of the judgment to come. It was the *cholera*! and as it strode towards them, while every face wore an anxious, a sad or thoughtful expression, the face of the other shadow which was clothed in the robes of penance grew more serene and bright, as if that which brought such terror to all, only came a messenger of hope to her. And so it was. “If it were only the Great Spirit’s sweet will,” she thought, “it will bring one deliverance and rest; but His will, not mine, be done!”

One day—it was a bright and glorious morning, just such a one as that on which the malignant plans laid for Coaina’s ruin seemed crowned with success—there suddenly arose from Altontinon’s lodge, shrill, piercing cries of pain, blended with the mournful *wakonowin*. The shadow had come! it had entered Altontinon’s lodge, and stricken her down even while she exulted in her health, her wickedness and her prosperity. Messengers ran here and there for assistance. Father Etienne was

soon beside her writhing, tortured form, but her kinsmen and people stood aloof, cowering outside the lodge, their hearts quailing within them as her shrieks of agony rent the air. While she wrestled for life with this awful shadow, the shadow in the garments of penance ministered to her needs. It was Coaina (obeying the directions of Father Etienne) who applied the hot poultices, who administered the fiery draughts which were thought efficacious, and which *were* marvellously so in ordinary cases; it was she who performed the most repulsive offices for the agonized woman, who wept over her, who clung to her cramped hands, who kissed her cold feet, and prayed without ceasing for her. None else would come near or touch her. Winonah, trembling and pallid, crouched in a distant corner, her head bowed upon her knees, incapable of performing the slightest duty. Suddenly Altontinon cried out: "I wronged her! I ruined her! She is innocent of all! Coaina, forgive me! forgive me! You are an angel! I am a devil! O, pray for me to the Holy Mother! Do not let me be cast into hell! O, save me from the flames! Hold me fast, Coaina! O, Christ, forgive me! Coaina, *forgive me!*"

"I forgive thee, my aunt, as I hope Christ will forgive me," she answered, kissing the blue, trembling lips of the dying sinner.

"Father Etienne, hear me! hear me! I will confess——" but here ensued such a mortal struggle that she was unable to continue. Her head was drawn round, her features, pinched and blue, were distorted with agony, and her arms and legs, drawn away, were knotted in muscular distortions fearful to behold. Father Etienne, startled by her confession of guilt, feared that the last agony was upon her, and knelt to pray for her departing soul. Coaina, also praying, bathed her feet with her tears. But the paroxysm subsided, and an interval of comparative ease ensued—of ease which was but the forerunner of that rest from suffering which the tortured body would soon enjoy.

"Call my child—call my kindred around me," said Altontinon, in feeble tones. "Quick, tell them to come, I have many words to say before them."

Father Etienne said: "Your confession first; your confession; then, what time you have left, say all that you wish."

"It is my confession. I must confess in public the evil I did in secret. O, my father, call them quickly, or I die!" plead Altontinon.

Father Etienne did as she desired, but it was only by the most urgent entreaties that he could get Winonah and the rest to approach the dying woman, whose shrunken features and pallid skin, which already hung loose and wrinkled from her bones, were dripping with the cold dews of dissolution, while the blue, ghastly shadow threw its cadaverous hue over it all. The group of her kinsmen and friends who entered stood some distance off, looking with dread at her changed appearance.

"Now," she said, "listen to my words, for this is my last confession. I ruined *her* by my malice," she continued, pointing her shrunken and almost powerless hand to Coaina; "because I wanted my own child to be the wife of Tar-ra-hee. I held counsel with Ahdeek, the Iroquois, who brought the robe, and I made up the story that Tar-ra-hee had left it for Coaina, and wished her to wear it to meet him on the shore. I wrote the letter that beguiled her to the medicine lodge! I set Tar-ra-hee to watch her! I arranged the whole plot to expose her! I persuaded my kinsmen to circulate evil reports about her! I made my own child lie, and make oath to her lie, that Coaina was a thief! *I did it!* Coaina is guiltless! No bap-

tized babe could be purer ! O, Coaina ! can you forgive me !”

“ My child,” said Father Etienne, tears flowing over his cheeks, as he approached and knelt before Coaina, “ my child, can you forgive us all ?”

“ O, my father !” cried Coaina, covered with confusion, as she knelt, and lifting the hem of his *soutane*, pressed it to her lips, “ this is too much.”

“ Say, my child, that you forgive us,” said Father Etienne.

“ O, my father ! yes, yes ! ten thousand, thousand times—but no ! what have I to forgive ? O, my aunt ! if you knew the peace and consolation that sufferings have brought me, you would rejoice, and be glad !” exclaimed Coaina, while her countenance shone with a divine peace. There was no exultation to mar its serenity, or cloud the tender pity of her eyes, now resting upon the face of Altontinon.

“ O, my father, darkness gathers around me,” said Altontinon, in a low, solemn voice. “ Coaina, do you forgive me ?”

“ As I hope Christ to forgive me, so do I forgive you with all my heart and soul,” she replied.

“ Then will *He* forgive me ! Oh, my sins ! my sins ! Father, help me ! The shadows grow dark-

er—the winds colder,” cried Altontinon, shuddering.

Father Etienne made a sign, and all withdrew from the presence of the fast sinking woman—her guilty accomplices filled with confusion and dread; the others bewildered by the strange revelations and appalling scenes they had witnessed; all withdrew except Coaina, whose hand was held fast in the death grasp of Altontinon. Father Etienne leaned over and heard her low murmuring words of penitence; her voice was almost gone, or she would have declared her sins aloud; in view of her great guilt, and the near approach of the dread judgment, no motive of human respect or shame could have withheld her; her only desire *now* was to relieve her conscience, that she might depart in the humble hope of one day finding safety and peace. Convinced of her true penitence, Father Etienne administered Extreme Unction, and pronounced the last absolution. She was too far gone to receive the supreme and crowning consolation of the Holy Viaticum.

“Does Coaina forgive me?” she whispered again.

“Coaina’s prayers have obtained your conversion; doubt not, then, her forgiveness in this extreme hour,” said Father Etienne.

"Have you prayed for me, Coaina? Through it all, Coaina? Can it be? Tell me, child!" she moaned.

"I have never ceased praying for you, my aunt," she replied, as she stooped down and kissed Alton-tinon's damp forehead, already marbled by the touch of death.

Then, for the first time, tears flowed from Alton-tinon's darkened eyes, and she whispered, almost gasping: "Call upon the holy names that I dare not speak; and while Father Etienne read the office for the dying, Coaina whispered over and over again in her ear the names of JESUS and MARY. She lay so silent and motionless they thought her dead, when she suddenly cried out: "Jesus, forgive," striking her breast with her shriveled hand; and with these words upon her lips, with her hand uplifted to inflict another self-accusing blow, the troubled soul of Altontinon passed away to the tribunal of Infinite Justice, where, we trust—despite her sins and misdeeds—it found safe shelter in the infinite mercy of Him who pardoned the dying thief.

Ere night settled upon the panic-stricken village, Winonah lay dead beside her mother. Confessing her sins, she humbly asked pardon of Coaina,

whom she had so cruelly assisted to injure, and, above all, for the public scandal produced by her malice and falsehoods, and died a few hours after she was stricken by the pestilence, in great agony and deep perturbation of soul.

Coaina had "missed the crown, but not the stake of martyrdom." The penitent confessions of Alton-tinon and Winonah, before so many witnesses, removed the stigma from her name and reputation. All were as anxious now to obtain a look or word from her as they were before eager to avoid her.

By what most people would call a remarkable coincidence, but which Monsigneur De C——, who was deeply versed in the ways of God, styled retributive justice, the first victims of cholera in that Algonquin village were Altontinon, Winonah, and five of their kinsfolk who were leagued with them in the wicked plot against the innocent Coaina, who perished, one after another, publicly confessing his or her agency in the affair, while they made the most solemn asseverations of her perfect innocence.

Like an angel, Coaina walked unscathed amidst the pestilence; her grey, penitential garments, so lately the insignia of her disgrace, were now honored as no royal robes were ever honored, and

hailed with blessings afar and near ; wherever she appeared, those who had slandered, defamed and made a mock of her, would fain have knelt and kissed the frayed and faded serge, had she allowed it. But such homage could not move her soul from its strong entrenchments upon that rock whither the storms of obloquy and humiliation had driven her, and where, in divine crucibles, the dross of her nature had been separated from the precious gold. With sweet and gentle words she received their repentant expressions of kindness, but hastened away from all who sought to detain her, to minister to the sick and dying. Standing or kneeling beside them, assisting Father Etienne in all that she could, holding the poor hands stiffening in death, or smoothing the cold forehead knotted with agony ; reciting the prayers and aspirations which their feeble tongues could no longer utter ; performing the most menial offices, shrinking, in fact, from nothing that she could do for the dying or convalescent, she gave herself but scant rest day or night until the dread pestilence, leaving behind its broad furrows of graves, passed away from among them, through the forests, southward.

CHAPTER X.

CROWNING.

It was with great joy that Coaina once more approached the divine sacraments. Like a pilgrim long abroad, and lost in a dreary wilderness, who suddenly finds himself at home, surrounded by its peaceful and holy endearments, and partaking of its joyful feasts, as one perishing with thirst in an arid desert suddenly beholds a cool fountain gush from the burning sands beside him; so felt she while kneeling at the shrine of our Blessed Lady, or before the altar to receive the Bread of refreshment and eternal life. Every moment, not devoted to the sick and to necessary repose, she spent in the chapel; it was her home, her refuge, her palace; it was to her the vestibule of heaven and the shadow of its everlasting repose, where she sat undisturbed at the feet of JESUS and MARY.

Old Ma-kee crept here and there after her, watching and waiting patiently her coming and going, seemingly satisfied if he could keep her in

sight, for he seldom spoke. Towards the people of the mission, he preserved the most dignified *hauteur*, only condescending to speak to them when he had an opportunity to say something very bitter; in fact old Ma-kee was a sort of moral nettle, stinging right and left, which helped the rash-minded in their penance, and gave the more humble something to think about. He was only an old pagan, we know, and it was his way to judge of a tree by its fruits; he was one of those witnesses no one thinks about, who will arise in the latter day to testify for or against the fidelity of christians to their opportunities and graces.

It was Sunday morning, and the mission chapel was crowded with those whom the pestilence had spared. Father Etienne had appointed that day not only as one of solemn thanksgiving, but was determined, with all the beautiful chivalry of his nation, and the still more noble chivalry of christianity, to make use of the opportunity to offer a public *amende* to Coaina, whose great humiliations had not only been public, but so entirely unmerited.

She, all unaware of what was coming, knelt in her old accustomed place, partly sheltered from view by a cluster of cedar posts. After Father Etienne had spoken in the most simple but impres-

sive manner, and with touching pathos, of the great mercy of God in having spared them while the pestilence was abroad, and told them how in gratitude they were more than ever bound to love and honor their Heavenly Protectress, of whom they were the special care, and devote themselves to Almighty God and His service by a stricter obedience to the rules of faith, and a closer observance of the requirements of charity; then he proposed that all should unite with him in saying the decade of the five Dolorous Mysteries of the Rosary, for the repose of the souls of those who had recently fallen victims to the scourge of the pestilence. Instantly, every knee was devoutly bent, and every head bowed, while the soul-touching devotion, with its solemn prayers and responses, was performed. Low sobs and fast falling tears attested the deep emotion felt by the congregation, and there is no doubt that the earnest and pathetic appeal to the mercy-seat in behalf of those who could no longer help themselves amidst the sweet torture of flame and exile, fell like refreshing dews upon their patient and suffering souls.

This over, the good priest then spoke of Coiana, who shrunk out of sight when she heard her name, covered with confusion and humility. He related,

in brief and simple language, the great wrongs that had been inflicted upon her, then declared how utterly groundless had been even the slightest suspicion of her; how guiltless she had been of the least crime charged against her; how each one who had slandered and conspired against her, had separately acknowledged their crime, and asserted her innocence with their dying breath; and then, turning toward where she knelt hidden by the cedar pillars and closely veiled, he asked in the name of all present, her forgiveness. Then he spoke to these simple children of the forest of the error of rash judgment, of the damnable sin of slander, of the bitter evils of envy, of the malice of pride, of the blighting effects of uncharitableness, which opens the door of the soul to all of the capital sins; after which he concluded by contrasting with these, the beauty of humility, the virtue of silence, the eternal fruits of penitence, the holiness of patience, the glory of true charity, and the divine virtue of forgiveness. All understood it. Not one there who would not have kissed the hem of Coaina's garment; but what was their astonishment when—as Coiana with bowed head and meekly folded hands, approached the altar and knelt to receive the “food of Angels”—they saw old Ma-kee, who

had been crouching somewhere out of sight, creep slowly forward, stand a moment erect and then kneel at Father Etienne's feet beside her, asking for baptism! It was from no want of knowledge, but of faith, that he had deferred and put aside christianity so long—he knew all that it taught; he had been living too long among christians, and was too shrewdly intelligent, and intelligently curious to be ignorant of christian doctrine or dogma, and now by some wonderful operation of Divine Providence—possibly in answer to Coaina's prayers, and to reward his charity toward her during the days of her tribulation—here at the last moment, just when the last sands were crumbling away from his frail foothold on life; the grace of faith was once more proffered him, not to be rejected again. That afternoon at vespers Ma-kee received the regenerating waters of baptism, putting off his old savage cognomen, won more than half a century before by his dexterity in scalping the victims which fell beneath his war club in the last fierce wars of his tribe, and received in its stead that of Peter. Ma-kee's conversion made quite a festival at the mission of the Two Mountains, but after it was over, the old chief was seen no more among them. He lay down one night upon his couch of skins, where he lingered

month after month, suffering from an incurable disease. He was removed on a litter to Coaina's lodge, where she nursed him with all the fidelity and tenderness of a daughter. Father Etienne saw him daily and comforted him with good counsel and cheering words. Except to these two he had but few words to say. When his friends, kinsmen and others of his tribe, young and old, flocked to see him, he had but one admonition, which he gave individually to them all, and repeated again whenever they came; this was: "JUDGE NOT." Unlike the beloved disciple at Patmos, he did not say: "Little children love one another;" Ma-kee was of sterner stuff, and had he been in the vigor of his prime, he would have been just as apt as not, had occasion offered, to have *enforced* his admonition by smiting off offenders' ears and otherwise inflicting such just punishment as the case in hand required. But he was too far gone now to do aught—to keep them in mind of the great sin of rash judgment and uncharitableness they had fallen into against his favorite—except say to them, one and all, "*Judge not,*" and they remembered the solemn sentence, after the old chief was laid in his christian grave until the end of their days.

All was changed for Coaina, but she remained

unchanged, except that her soul ripened in virtue and grace. She would fain have continued to wear her grey robes of penance, but Father Etienne represented to her that they were a daily reproach to every one in the village, reminding them of their injustice against her, and expressed his own desire that she should leave them off; then for the sake of charity, and in a spirit of obedience, she did so, and wore a dress and veil of fine cloth, embroidered and faced with white silk, which the ladies of Montreal, who had heard her strange story, had sent to Father Etienne for her acceptance.

Tar-ra-hee, who had been faithful to her in heart, again sought her for his wife, and other alliances equally as honorable were offered, but she rejected them all with modest and gentle dignity, saying: "I have found my true and constant Lover, He not only comforted and sustained me, when all else failed, and the world abandoned me; but He also suffered and died for me."

Ah, happy she to have so early tested the nothingness of this life, and tasted so soon the bitter lees of its flower-crowned cup; most happy for her, that the staff upon which she had leaned in thoughtless security, broke in twain, piercing her and driving her to the support of one which would

support her in the "valley of the shadow of death." For Coaina was fading away from this life; her eyes grew brighter, and her cheeks wore that crimson hue, which harbingers dissolution, as the reddening of the forest leaves tells of the death fires which consume their life. Her step, once so swift and light, became feeble and slow; and ere long, she was confined to her lodge. **"Changed from penitential silence to a place of pilgrimage, her abode became the resort of people from far and near. As they go to visit the relics and shrines of saints, they came to look upon her; to hear a last word from her lips, to inhale the odor of her virtues, and recommend themselves to her prayers. I saw one, who went in to visit her, come hastily out—the big tears rolling over his face—saying: 'I am unworthy to remain longer in the presence of such an angel.'"*

Fading away like the morning star into the brightness of dawn, Coaina—all unmoved except to deeper humility by all the prodigal attentions lavished upon her, and scarcely understanding the interest she excited, so unconscious was she of any superior excellence—felt that her end was drawing near. It was past midnight, and so far from any

* Monseigneur De C—.

appearance of approaching dissolution about her, her friends who had been watching beside her, thought they had not seen her look so well and strong for many weeks. There was a look of joy in her face, an elasticity in her motions, and a clear musical ring in her voice which filled them with astonishment, and hope that she was yet to be spared to them. But it was only the girding-up of the pilgrim, who, after his toilsome march, sees through the mist the joyful glimmer upon the walls of the city, where his weary form will find rest and his toils their crown and reward. She was dying, dying in cheerful hope, and calmly made her preparations for the event. She asked for her richest garments, those which she had fashioned with such taste and care nearly four years ago, for her wedding attire, composed of rich stuffs of various and beautiful colors, adorned with brilliant feathers, with pearls and silver and gold fringes; and with the assistance of her friends, arrayed herself in it. Bathing her face and hands, she smoothed back her beautiful hair, now grown long and silky, and placed upon her head the exquisite wreath of feather flowers and pearls, sent to her by the nuns of Notre Dame; she composed herself upon her pillow, her hands folded upon her bosom, holding her beloved

rosary, which she continued to recite, while she awaited with serene composure the coming of Father Etienne (who had been sent for) with the Holy Viaticum. Soon he came and gave her the holy anointing, all present uniting fervently in the prayers, while they watched through their tears the kindling brightness of her face; after which he approached her, holding in his veiled hands the Most Holy Viaticum, the Bread which consoleth, the Lamb which taketh away all sin. She stretched out her thin dusky hands toward the Divine Guest, and while her eyes glowed with unearthly lustre, she exclaimed in clear, sweet tones: "Welcome, beloved Lord. I bless Thee, my God, that I have been counted worthy to be treated some little like Thy Divine Son; and I bless and forgive, ten thousand times, all who ever injured me. Come, sweet Jesus, it is now that my wedding feasts are about to begin, never to end!"

These were the last words uttered by Coaina, for after having received the Holy Viaticum, and last absolution, she lay with folded hands, her large bright eyes fixed upon the crucifix and the image of Mary at the foot of her bed, speechless and motionless, and they thought, as they gazed upon her with tender awe, that she held communication with

angels, all unseen by them. Beautiful—by the flickering light of tapers, which glistened with fitful rays among the gold and silver trimmings of her bridal dress, flashing out here and there, as with hidden glories—looked the Indian maiden; but more fair and lovely looked she, when the first golden sunbeams stole through the vines, and lighted up those soft tender eyes, now gazing upon far greater and more distant glories—for she was dead. No one knew the moment of her passing away, it was so serene. Her tender and faithful devotion to the Immaculate Mother of Jesus, her patient virtues so like unto hers, crowned this supreme hour with peace, and obtained for her, we trust, swift admission to the ineffable joys of her Divine Son.

Certain it is, that the remembrance of the gentle Coaina's devotion to the Blessed Mother—under whose invocation the Mission was established over a century before—combined with a knowledge of the fruits thereof, which they had all witnessed, not only in the conversion of her enemies, but the increased ardor of the people of the Mission, added but another link to the glittering chain of evidence which stretches from the humble house of Nazareth, through the hoary centuries, down to our own

times, of the efficacy of the powerful intercession of the Virgin Mother, whose Immaculate Conception cannot be doubted without doubting God; for if He, by His Divine power, created Eve, who was to become the mother of men, pure and spotless, who will dare doubt that by the same Divine power, suspending the common laws of fallen nature, He created pure and without blemish, her, who from all eternity was predestined to the wonderful dignity of becoming the Mother of His Divine Son. Of her flesh was formed His; who then can believe that that virginal flesh had taint or stain of the pollution of the fall? Let us hail thee, then, our Immaculate Mother and tender friend, given to us by Almighty God from His high throne in heaven; bequeathed to us by Jesus from the bloody Cross on Calvary! hail thee as our compassionate intercessor with thy Son, who is to be our Judge, imploring thee, who partook of all the bitterness of the cup He drained for our salvation, and who knowest so well our human infirmities, to obtain for us such graces that these august sufferings and infinite ransom may not, through our own fault, become useless to us.

We have concluded the narrative of Coaina, the Rose of the Algonquins, and will close by once more

quoting from Monseigneur De C—— : “ Her burial was more like a triumph than a scene of mourning, and to this day she is honored and invoked by the christians of the mission of the ‘Lake of the Two Mountains,’ as virgin, and martyr to false testimony.

[The following is the autograph to which we have alluded in the commencement of COAINA. It was written by Monsigneur de Charbonnel, Bishop of Toronto, C. W., when he was studying the English language at Saint Mary’s Seminary, Baltimore. Subsequently, having received permission from the Holy Father, he resigned the mitre, and retired to a cloister of one of the contemplative Orders in Europe :]

We have near Montreal a Catholic congregation of Indian savages. Their village is situated on the banks of a beautiful lake formed by the waters of the Ottawa, and crowned with two very pleasant little mountains. Hence this village is called the Lake of the Two Mountains.

There was in this village a young Indian girl, still living last year ; I will call her Coaina (Catherine). She was an orphan, educated by her aunt.

Almighty God, the special Father of orphans, granted this girl so many graces, and she was so faithful to His inspirations, that, so striking was her piety, docility, modesty and amiability, she possessed the esteem and affection of all the village. She made the family of her aunt happy, and parents proposed her to their children as a model to imitate. From her first years, like those of her tribe, she was employed in hunting.

Every autumn they leave their village, and start with all their little children to the northwest. Every family embarks in its small and very light canoe, and with this frail vessel goes up the river and lakes two thousand miles distant. In certain places they leave the river, on account of the dreadful rapids through the rocks and falls, and carry their canoes and baggage around. Their happiness is to have with them a missionary, to follow them during all their hunting. It is not two years since that one priest was drowned, with all those who were in the same canoe. Glorious and happy death for a priest devoted to the glory of God and good of souls! Arrived at the woods, in places excellent for hunting, every family erects a hut with trees and branches to pass the winter. All their occupation during that season is to hunt ;

they live on the animals which they kill or catch, and at their return they sell the skins of these animals, whose furs are so well appreciated in our cities as a defence against the sharpness of the winter. You may judge how hard must be such a life through rivers and lakes and woods, rain and snow, frost and ice, particularly for the tender children.

However, our young girl, in this manner of living, became as strong, as skilful a huntress, as she was pious and amiable. No one surpassed her in running, in jumping, in climbing up the trees, in shooting; but she surpassed all the others in piety and modesty. Accomplished as Coaina was, the son of the chief of the tribe wished to marry her, and the marriage was to be soon celebrated with great feasts through the village, when all was stopped and changed. Her aunt charged her with many crimes; the judges of the tribe held their solemn assembly to decide the case; witnesses were heard, and on their depositions the accused girl was convicted of several crimes, and condemned to a public penance, and as much despised as she was before esteemed and praised by everybody. For several years the coming in the church and the receiving of the holy Communion were for-

bidden to her; during the offices, when people were coming in or going out, she was obliged to kneel down or stand outside of the door of the temple, with a dress of penance, and the title of a hypocrite.

Meanwhile the cholera broke out; all the relatives of Coaina were seized, and her aunt the first, and more severely than the others. In fear of death, judgment and hell, she called the priest and the judges, and declared that all the accusations against her niece were but lies, false testimony, calumnies inspired by the devil of jealousy, because her niece had been preferred to her own daughter by the son of the chief of the tribe; all the other accusers confessed the same before they died. Hence, our innocent victim was not now esteemed, as before her condemnation, like a saint, but an angel. The most advantageous alliances were proposed to her, but she refused them all, to belong more closely to God alone.

The year before last, Coaina was taken sick; during her sickness her cottage was changed into a place of pilgrimage—every one came to her, as people go to the relics of the saints, wishing to see her again, to hear a last word from her mouth, to inhale the odor of her virtues, to recommend them-

selves to her prayers ; and one day a public sinner being invited to visit the holy sick—I, said he, shedding some big tears, I, to approach such an angel ! I am unworthy of it.

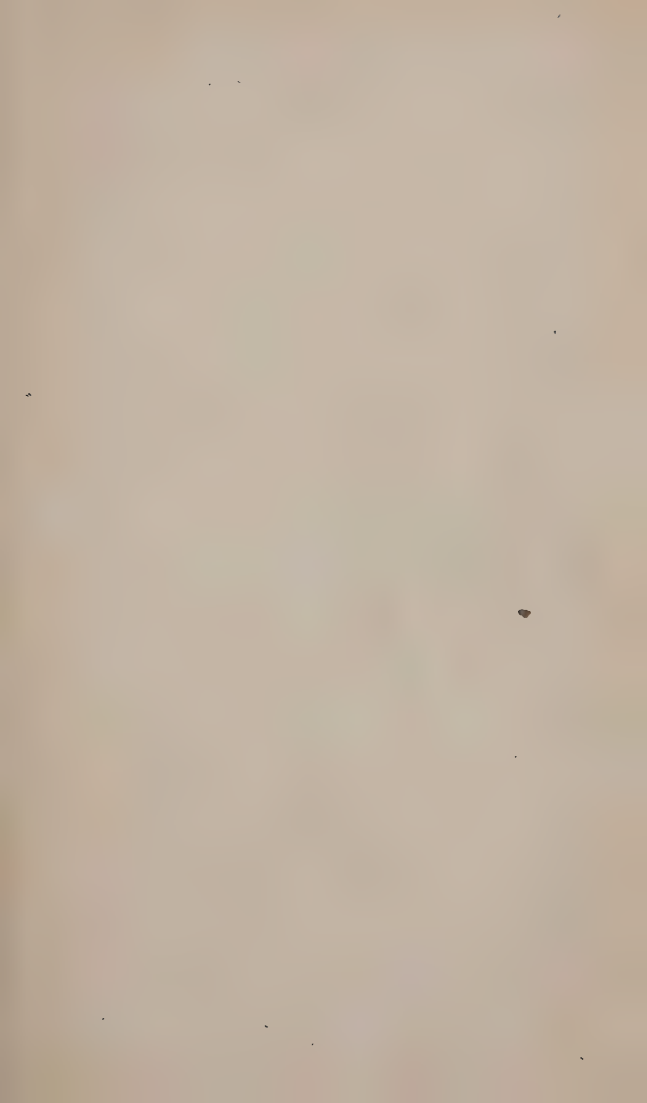
Coaina, feeling death very near, asked for her full dress, composed of stuffs of various and brilliant colours, adorned with feathers, pearls, silver and gold fringes, received the sacraments with the most edifying fervor, blessing God for having been treated a little as her innocent Saviour, and forgiving a thousand times her calumniators. Her confessor, who would not speak when she was condemned, said now that her aunt and relations were indebted for their conversion to the fervent prayers which she did not cease to say in their behalf during her penance. What a heroical charity !

Her last words were these : It is now that my wedding feasts are going to begin, not to end. Her burial was rather a triumph than a mourning. Everybody in the village honors and invokes her as a virgin, and a martyr of false testimonies.

God tries sometimes, but never gives up the just ; and He always rewards them, here and in heaven, according to their generosity in trials and crosses. Pray for your servant in Christ,

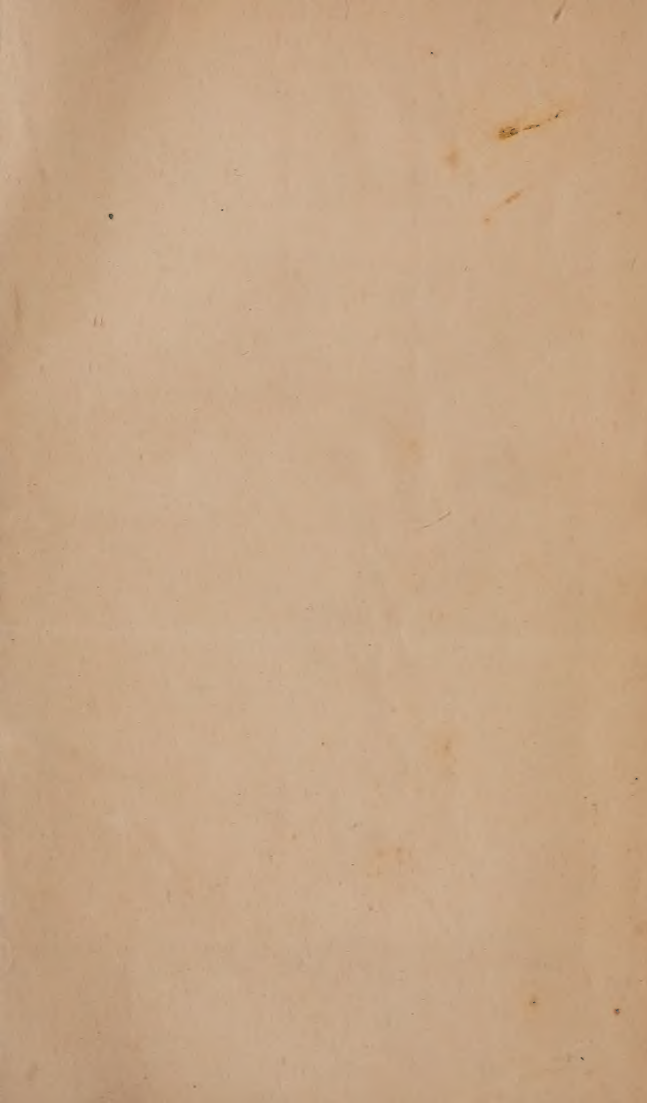
A. CHARBONNEL.

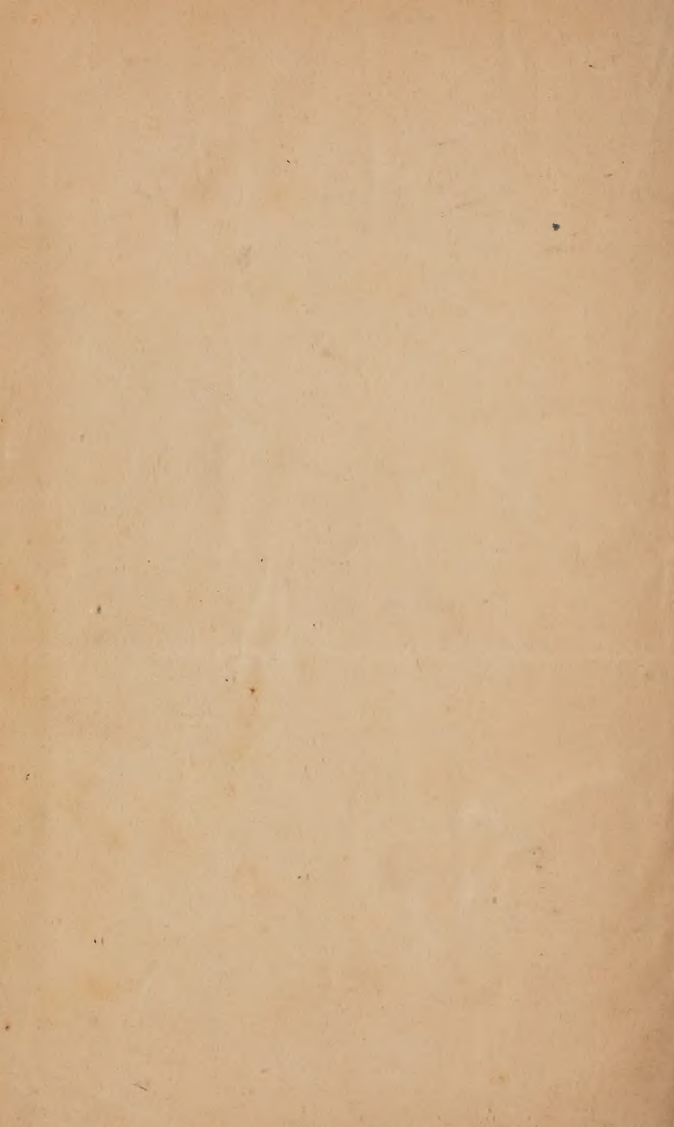












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